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THE SACRAMENT OF UNITY

"Within the S.C.M. we have recognised a more than human fellowship across confessional boundaries... Yet the members of this fellowship are unable to realise the fullness of Christian life together because they are separated at the central acts of worship by the divisions of the churches in which they are rooted. We are shamed before men by our divisions, and feel a profound restlessness of the Spirit driving us to work for the reunion of the churches." This restlessness to which the resolution of the General Committee of the Federation alluded a few months ago has been felt bitterly by many of our members during recent years on the occasion of almost all conferences and meetings, when they found themselves suddenly confronted with the tragic reality of the Church's division at the eucharistic celebration. Many have felt wounded in their Christian hearts when, after experiencing the richness of One Church in study, discussion and prayer, they were denied the richest blessing of communion in the body and blood of the Saviour. Some rebelled and wished to disregard confessional rules by holding communion services in which all could join in adoration and expectation. Then they encountered

the painful refusal of those who were unable to break with their confessional loyalties, since these were but an expression of their deepest religious convictions. As a result, at a great many conferences, vital, difficult, but rewarding discussions took place in which, once again, the divisions of the churches at the Lord's Table were questioned and the policy of the Federation in that respect discussed.

It may be said that such student protests are a result of ignorance; and it is true that those who were most bitter about separate and closed communion services at Federation conferences were generally those who had come from environments in which they had never before had an opportunity to meet representatives of other confessions. They were shocked by their discovery of the tragic reality of disunity. However there may be more truth in this naïve reaction of young people confronted for the first time by the implications of ecumenism than in the cautious scepticism of those who accept division as a fact, sad but inescapable. It is healthy and profitable for the Church to be reminded of the scandal which its divisions represent for the faith of simple Christians. It may be that the most valuable service which the Federation can render the Church is to be, within her, a source of restlessness, of constant longing for unity, a clumsy but useful instrument in the great task of reunion which has been undertaken by the ecumenical movement.

Accordingly the resolution adopted by the General Committee of the Federation last summer reads: "Our real pioneering task lies within, not apart from our churches. However, our loyalty to the Church involves us in pressing our several churches to consider the issues arising from our experience of *koinonia* within the Federation." In that spirit the Federation accepted the invitation of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches to cooperate in the study of all problems of intercommunion now pending between the various denominations. By so doing the Federation expressed its concern that all its members, in view of

“the central importance” of the Lord’s Supper for Christian faith and life, devote as much time and energy as possible to “the study of the Bible and the doctrine of the churches on the nature of the sacrament”, in an effort to further the cause of reunion and full fellowship at the Lord’s Table.

The present issue of *The Student World* is one of the first efforts of the Federation in that direction. It is intended primarily to inform members and friends of the Federation of the problems which have arisen in connection with the Lord’s Supper and its celebration at ecumenical meetings. It also aims to provide those who wish to share in the study of these problems with expressions of the various views which have been advanced in recent discussions, by both so-called “catholic” and “protestant” sides. It finally includes some letters which were written by delegates to the Federation meetings of last summer and which may express, in a more concrete way, the serious search for unity, in suffering but also with joy, of Christian students today.

It is rather striking to notice, in reading these various articles, that all of them express a similar concern for the Church’s unity, a similar hunger for the food which Jesus Christ gives to His Church, a similar longing for the Great Day when He will make us all one in Him. In the previous number of *The Student World* on history, several writers emphasised the extreme importance of eschatological thinking in Christian theology. The present discussion on intercommunion, by constantly referring to our eschatological hope, by leading as it were towards it, is a vivid illustration of its crucial place in our faith and life. It seems that while confronting the marvellous and impossible task of unity, and depending upon Christ for our nourishment and strength, we can only look towards the glory of His second Advent and, with the primitive Church, pray: “Come, Lord Jesus.”

PH. M.

STATEMENT OF ECUMENICAL POLICY

TWO RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL COMMITTEE
OF THE WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION, WHITBY,
CANADA, AUGUST 1949.

I. Basis of the Relationships between the Student Christian Movement and the Churches

A. We confess one Holy Catholic Church. It is in this confession that we find ourselves united and at the same time most painfully divided. Several unreconciled views of the essential nature of the Church, of the nature of our present unity and disunity, and of the nature of the unity we seek are represented in the churches themselves and reflected in the Federation. We hearken to our Lord's prayer, "that they all may be one, that the world may believe", and are moved to penitence at our divided state. Yet we cannot fail to recognise that the divisions of the churches proceed in part from their historic witness to diverse aspects of Christian truth, and that the organic unity for which we pray must not be confused with uniformity.

B. In this situation the S.C.M. has three main responsibilities.

1. The field of witness of the S.C.M. is the university. Jesus Christ as Lord of all is Lord also of the university. The S.C.M. cannot represent the wholeness of the Church's life in the university, but it can perform a special task in so far as it tries to bring the characteristic life of the university, intellectual, cultural, social and personal into obedience to Christ, and begins to show forth the true nature of university life. We believe that its efforts in this respect may suggest a pattern for the Church's life in many other spheres of the contemporary world.

2. The S.C.M. is not a church, but its life is part of the life of the Church. Within the S.C.M. we have recognised a more

than human fellowship across confessional boundaries, to which we are bound to bear witness as a fact, and as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Yet the members of this fellowship are unable to realise the fulness of Christian life together because they are separated at the central acts of worship by the divisions of the churches in which they are rooted. We are shamed before men by our divisions, and feel a profound restlessness of the Spirit driving us to work for the reunion of the churches.

3. The Student Movement was called into existence by the pressing task of evangelism not only in the university but in the world mission of the Church. The S.C.M. must never lose its concern for this mission which is not defined by geographical areas. The very universities from which our missionaries come are themselves frontiers for evangelisation, wherever these universities may be. We must learn to see that there is no hard and fast distinction between evangelism and missions as each necessitates the other.

C. These three main responsibilities have consequences for our relationships with the churches.

1. The S.C.M. is charged to help members of the university community to a deeper commitment to Jesus Christ. Experience has shown that this task is best performed under the leadership of members of the academic community itself, and of students in particular, with such ministers and other leaders from within and without the university as they may desire. The S.C.M. is bound in a positive relationship with the churches, but the nature of its task is such that it ought not to be dominated by those from outside the university who are not personally familiar with the inherent character of Christian obedience in this sphere.

2. The S.C.M. must offer an open fellowship, consistent with the life of the Church. The Church when true to its missionary calling follows the apostolic practice of gathering around itself a circle of inquirers at every level of understanding and commitment. The S.C.M.'s open community reflects this apostolic practice, and is based on the same principle. Membership of the Church, however, is to be clearly distinguished from this wider fellowship. It follows that the S.C.M. must confront its members with the necessity of full commitment in membership of a church,

and must help to train them in the meaning and practice of churchmanship.

3. The particular task of the S.C.M. as an ecumenical movement in the university is to make possible the experience of ecumenical community, taking with utmost seriousness the fact that participation in the life of the Body of Christ is impossible apart from membership in one of the churches. This requires of the S.C.M. that it help its members to gain a vision of the Church Universal, and to be loyal to their own church. This involves pain which is inseparable from any true ecumenical life. Further, to be ecumenical, the S.C.M. must hold within its fellowship the widest possible range of Christian tradition.

This implies, firstly, that we can admit confessional groups in the Federation "only if they are willing to enter into fellowship with other groups of interconfessional or confessional nature, and to share effectively in the life, both of the national Movements, which they jointly compose, and of the Federation as a whole" (Zeist 1932). This principle is equally valid for interconfessional or non-confessional groups. Secondly, Movements which draw their membership in fact from one or from similar Christian traditions have a special responsibility to bring sympathetically into the life of their fellowship the riches of Christian traditions dissimilar from their own. Thirdly, the effort to achieve unity among the student groups themselves is the indispensable foundation of anything we may feel called to say to other bodies.

4. Because the S.C.M. is an evangelistic and ecumenical movement, it has a particular responsibility to encourage the unity of the churches in their missionary task. Christ's prayer for unity was in order "that the world may believe". The S.C.M. must urge upon the missionary societies the necessity of a more ecumenical approach. It must seek to understand and interpret the reunion which already has been achieved in many areas of the Younger Churches, and the continued efforts toward unity which are being made. It must support not only the cause of unity among these churches and among the missionary societies but also the integration of the churches and missionary societies. This it cannot achieve apart from an ecumenical missionary witness within its own life attesting in the university to the power that comes from unity in Christ.

5. The Lordship of Christ over every realm of life has implications for all spheres of Christian activity. In relation to the churches, the S.C.M. has the peculiar task of training students to live their total lives related to whatever calling they may pursue to the glory of God in union with the Church's worship. They must be helped to understand and exemplify this unity of worship and work. They must actively participate in the life of a particular church where the Lordship of Jesus Christ in their daily lives may be strengthened and expressed.

6. The S.C.M. is called to witness in the churches to the vision of the Holy Catholic Church. It is called to experiment, challenge and pioneer through its members as individuals and through its actions as a community. It must hold before the churches its belief in the Church as the one Body of Christ, and its faith that the prayer of our Lord is not in vain — "that they all may be one, that the world may believe".

II. Communion and Intercommunion

This resolution, unanimously adopted by the Federation General Committee, includes three sections on Basic Principles, Policy and Tasks. In addition two sections on Practices within the Federation and its Member Movements, and on Tensions were received as valuable study material.

In all Federation meetings and conferences there is reflected the variety and the disunity of the Christian churches. While in the Federation's life there is the discovery in many ways of deep unity, the disunity of Christians is nowhere more sharply focused than in the loyalties and practices which students as church members have on the question of observance of the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

N. B. — There are many names by which Communion is described in the churches, for example, Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Ordinance, Holy Liturgy, Sacrament of Holy Communion. The report uses these names without specific theological implication.

The General Committee in its meeting at Chamcoria in 1935 suggested that the most practicable step at the time was the attendance by church members of different traditions at each other's services of communion, even without receiving communion if church discipline so required. The discussions of recent years among those who hold opposite views, and those who challenge the Chamcoria decision, have been sharp, sincere, and indicative of the necessity for a new consideration of the whole question of communion and a restatement of policy.

I. BASIC PRINCIPLES

The General Committee commends to its member Movements certain basic principles which have been found valid in the life of the Federation, and accepts them for the guidance of its staff and officers in planning Federation programmes and meetings.

1. The loyalties which members of constituent Movements rightly owe to their own churches must be fully respected, and justice done to them in all the Federation practice. But our divisions are contrary to the will of Christ and therefore radically sinful as well as tragic in character. Hence members of the Federation must be challenged to see beyond confessional limits and to study, pray, and work for the unity of the Church.

2. Consequently, the Federation's practice aims at making evident the true character of the situation and accordingly it must avoid laying exclusive emphasis either on the unity thus far discovered or on the existing division of the churches.

3. The Federation is not the Church nor a church. The sacrament and provisions for its administration are wholly the province of the churches, and its various forms are integral to the confessions in which they are found.

4. The General Committee considers the Holy Communion to be of central importance in Christian faith and life. Consequently, in Federation meetings opportunity should be provided for participation in Holy Communion by all present and no activities should interfere with such provision.

5. Therefore the Federation, during its conferences and meetings, cannot hold communion services of its own, and must

avoid appearing to do so. In no circumstances can the Federation improvise services of Holy Communion which are not those of any church.

6. It is only from the struggle and suffering faced in the tensions between unity and disunity that the fruit of ecumenical advance may grow. This fruit of a fuller churchmanship depends upon a new willingness to engage in serious study and to listen prayerfully and obediently to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

II. PRACTICES WITHIN THE FEDERATION AND ITS MEMBER MOVEMENTS

This section which is of a purely documentary nature is not reproduced here since it consists only of a description of the various methods used at present in meetings of Student Christian Movements and is not a statement of any definite policy. Those interested can secure the full text from the W.S.C.F. Headquarters.

III. POLICY

We do not find it possible to recommend that the Federation bind itself to any one of the above practices to the complete exclusion of all others. Since this issue is so often the point at which the ecumenical tension becomes sharpest it may also be the growing point of ecumenical progress. We believe that this question can never become closed until we have the reunited Church for which we pray. It remains scandalous in the last degree that those who recognise one another as being in Christ have to reject one another in the sacrament of unity.

Those who regard intercommunion as a means to reunion must examine seriously the position of those who hold that intercommunion is the sign of achieved Church union and that its practice apart from such union is a cause of disruption. Likewise, those who from theological conviction reject the practice of intercommunion as a means to reunion must be continually re-examining themselves as to the real reasons for their continued separation.

Those responsible for planning worship at Federation conferences must be ever alert for the leading of the Holy Spirit toward a new approach and must continually and prayerfully rethink

their policy in the light of the principles stated above. In cases where more than one communion service is held on the same day we recommend that they should be held at the same hour and preceded by a common service of preparation.

We would urge that the traditional view that only those services mentioned in the conference programme can be regarded as involving the conference as a whole evades the issue. Whenever a communion services is held within our reach we are challenged — the question of our participation is raised. Though the final responsibility in all cases rests with the church concerned, those who plan conferences remain responsible for taking seriously their decisions as to what suggestions they make to the churches and for safeguarding the principles outlined in this report. These principles apply to every service held in connection with a Federation meeting and not only those on the printed programme of a conference.

IV. TENSIONS

We would respectfully offer to the churches and to the World Council of Churches some comments on the serious tensions in our Christian lives which arise on this subject.

We are well aware that much of the discontent of students with church discipline springs from ignorance of the historical and theological reasons for disunity, and from a defective churchmanship that mistakes a sense of fellowship among a group of individuals for the true *koinonia* of the Holy Catholic Church. Yet it remains true that those who have seriously faced these problems and reached a genuine churchmanship, find themselves involved in an agonising dilemma between loyalty to their own church and to the Holy Catholic Church.

In the Federation and its Movements we continually experience the sense of being bound by the Holy Spirit into a deeper realisation of the true *koinonia*, than we to-day find in any one of the churches ; and this sense is experienced especially by loyal members of their own churches who are frankly facing their differences together. To split this *koinonia* of the Holy Spirit at the sacrament of unity hurts us at the deepest level of our Christian existence.

More concretely, we would suggest that the Federation when it meets, manifests some of the characteristics of a true congregation of the church more widely and deeply than any of the churches from which we come, though other characteristics are necessarily lacking. We do not know the theological implications of this, but we believe it to be a fact.

We are also deeply distressed by the transconfessional nature of our differences, which have the result that we are often out of communion with those with whom we most deeply agree, and sometimes in communion with those with whom we are in sharp disagreement. We respectfully ask our churches to consider in the light of this generally acknowledged fact whether it is any longer theological disagreement that separates us at the Lord's Table or some other causes.

In general we cannot refrain from pressing on the leaders of our churches the extreme urgency of the ecumenical task and of continually working toward the corporate reunion that will make it possible for us to meet together at the Lord's Table in complete loyalty to our churches and the Church.

V. TASKS

A. The Federation in its ecumenical task is called to study, prayer and personal commitment to one another in Christ. We recommend that study of the Bible and the doctrine of the churches on the nature of the sacrament and especially the significance of participation together in communion be more widely practiced in the Federation and its member Movements, and that our policy in this regard be continually re-thought in the light of such study. We must be continually involved in the task of entering sympathetically into one another's positions. We are convinced that administrative arrangements in themselves are not able to solve these spiritual problems.

B. We gratefully acknowledge receipt of a paper on intercommunion from a group of Chinese student leaders, and suggest that this example of study and the recording of its results be emulated by our Movements.

C. We are grateful to the World Council of Churches' Commission on Faith and Order for a letter on this subject and for

the invitation therein contained to send two or more representatives to the discussions of the Commission on Intercommunion, which we recommend the Federation to accept.

D. We suggest that a future issue of *The Student World* be devoted to the subject of Holy Communion.

E. If and when the recent ecumenical consultation at Bossey should be repeated, we suggest that the issues on communion described in this report be on the agenda.

CONCLUSION

We must guard against the development of small groups committed to one another becoming detached from the life of their own churches ; and thus attempting to resolve the ecumenical tensions by giving all their loyalties to the Federation fellowship. This would be fatal to work for church unity. It is thus that heresies and schisms are generated, not overcome.

Our real pioneering task lies within, not apart from our churches. However, our loyalty to the Church involves us in pressing our several churches to consider the issues arising from our experience of *koinonia* within the Federation. As members of the churches at the student level we rejoice that the churches meeting at Amsterdam covenanted to stay together and to receive correction from one another in Christ, and we call upon them to consider seriously the implications of this decision for their relations with one another, in which, in some cases, they deny churchmanship to members of churches other than their own.

Lord's Supper and Community, a New Testament Study

DOMINIQUE MICHELI

If we are to capture the meaning of the sacrament of Holy Communion in the Christian community we shall find it essential to go back to its origin, that is to say to the Last Supper which Jesus shared with His disciples in the upper room. Here we have a fact which took place at a definite moment of history on a particular geographical spot. We must try once more to fit into the precise setting of that moment and that locality the acts which were performed and the words which were spoken on the evening when Jesus for the last time met round the table with a little group of His disciples.

At the very start, before we can begin our investigation we are faced with the fact that this was a *common meal*. No historian has ever questioned that those few men who met in the upper room formed at that precise moment of history a group which was wholly distinct from the rest of mankind, a group which found itself in a particular situation and whose members shared a common joy and hope. This fact is so obvious that we no longer think of emphasizing it. However we shall see that it is necessary by very reason of the evidence it brings to insist upon this fact every time that we speak of the Holy Communion.

Israel's deliverance

What was the nature of this common meal shared by several men? One question which continues to be discussed is the relationship between the last meal of

Jesus with His disciples and the traditional family meal of the Jews eaten on the occasion of the great feast of the Passover. In any case it is obvious that if we are to understand the meal taken by Jesus with His disciples we must also know what the Jewish Passover feast really was.

Now what significance did this preparation for Passover hold for the Jews? They were concerned to recall the infinite grace of God which delivered the people of Israel from its servitude in Egypt. Still more precisely, it was necessary to make real to each individual the bitterness of captivity along with the joy of deliverance. This actually happened during the Passover meal. If they were to understand how hard the years of bondage had been they needed to eat the bitter herbs. If they were to taste the marvellous joy of deliverance they needed to drink the cups of wine which were passed round, and to let their gratitude break forth they needed to sing the psalms of praise. Above all they needed to be reminded that the blood of the lamb had served as a symbol of the grace of God to all those who were about to be delivered. Further they could not forget as they ate the unleavened bread that the people were fed in the wilderness by the love of God freely given. So each element of the Jewish ritual was there to awaken the memory of what had happened in the history of the people of Israel: and, what was even more important, these elements were designed to make real to each believer the great event of the deliverance worked by God after his people had suffered in Egypt. This however is not the whole story. As always in Jewish thought, past and present happenings are charged with future meaning. All these actions and words, which recalled what God had done for His people in the past and made it real for those who shared in the feast, proclaimed at one and the same time that the hour was coming when

God, by the approach of His Messiah, would establish a new era in which the final deliverance of the people should be accomplished. This eschatological event was so real, and the expectation of the Messiah so intense, that there always stood on the table about which the Jewish family assembled a special cup destined for the Messiah in case he should appear in the course of the meal. So when the Jews celebrated the Passover, they witnessed the realization before their eyes of the glorious history of their fathers, while that very moment of time was for them burdened with the great messianic promise. But we must add, in order to make the account complete, that it was not as isolated individuals but as members of the people of God that the Jews were conscious of these realities. The theological substance of the Passover meal made them also aware of a sociological fact. The two aspects were entirely inseparable, and it would be no less accurate to say that the fact of belonging to a particular sociological group enabled the Jews to understand the theological meaning of the Passover meal. In other words, the elements of the Jewish Passover set in very strong relief the notion of community, which existed because of the deliverance which God had granted the people of Israel in the past and because of their expectation of a yet greater deliverance on the day of the coming of the Messiah.

A new dispensation

It was then in this atmosphere that Jesus shared His last meal with His disciples. But there was still another element in the scene for that little group in the upper room : Jesus knew what was awaiting Him in Jerusalem, and He had already announced to His friends that He was going up to the city to be delivered to death. Jesus knew that His ministry was nearing its end. He was fully

aware that obedience to His Father would lead Him to the agony of Gethsemane and to the sufferings and death of Golgotha. It was precisely by the gift of His life which He was about to make that His whole work was to reveal its true meaning. It was in this way that He was truly to become the Messiah and inaugurate the new and final covenant, just as the old covenant had been inaugurated by the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb. The Passover ritual was already burdened with meaning, but Jesus was about to add to it the load of actions which He alone could perform and of words which He alone could speak, since none but He among sinful men could enter into combat with the power of Satan for the deliverance and salvation of the world.

The little company in the upper room was no longer only the Jewish community recalling the historic deliverance of the past and waiting for the messianic deliverance, but for the first time in history it was a new community living in the presence of its Saviour. It is only possible to understand the actions which were performed and the words which were spoken in so far as we do not isolate them from the new and particular situation in which the disciples found themselves with their Master.

"Take, eat, this is my body", said Jesus as He distributed the bread to His disciples. What did He mean them to understand by these words? It is clear that Jesus was thinking about His body which was to be delivered to death, or if we prefer to say so, of the sacrifice He was about to make of His life. On the other hand the elements of the Passover meal would, at the moment of eating, make real to the participants the events of the history of deliverance. While remaining what they were these elements would lead the guests to enter into the profound meaning of this event. In the same way Jesus desired to make His friends enter into this new event

which should open for men the way to salvation — His death upon the cross. He wished to make them understand that in eating this bread they were making their own the benefits of the work He was about to accomplish for them. The bread was for those who received it a sign that they shared in the fruit of that death and that they were truly delivered and saved by it. In eating this bread they understood in a concrete way that they benefited from the new covenant established by the Lord on His death, even as the Jews knew in a concrete way that by participating in the Passover feast they took part in the old covenant which was inaugurated by the sacrifice of the lamb.

The distribution of the bread helped the disciples to understand how the new dispensation took its place in the history of the world — by the work of the Cross. It helped them no less to understand who it was that shared in this new dispensation: those who fed upon the bread which was given for the life of the world. Here as in the Jewish feast, but with a new meaning, acts and words only had real significance because a group of men made the meaning their own. In receiving and in eating the bread the disciples understood that they were set apart from the rest of mankind because they formed a community which came into being not in spite of but because of the death of their Master.

The cup of the Kingdom

After He had broken and distributed the bread Jesus passed the cup round to the disciples. At the moment of Passover the Jews realized anew the certainty of past deliverance, granted by God to His people, a certainty which at the same time became a pledge of the final deliverance to come with the messianic era. In the Old Testament we constantly find the cup used as the symbol,

for those who drink of it, of their sharing in the destiny and particularly in the blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven (Jer. 25 : 15 ; Ps. 16 : 5, 6, 9, 11 ; Ps. 116 : 13). Now in the accounts of the Last Supper of Jesus we find clear allusions to the Kingdom of God (Luke 22 : 15-18 ; Matt. 26 : 29 ; Luke 14 : 25 ; Luke 22 : 29, 30). "Drink ye of it. I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." This is the meaning of the words used by Jesus when he passed round the cup. By the symbol represented by this cup the communion shared by the disciples in the upper room with their Master became the anticipation of the communion of the redeemed with their Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven. When Jesus passed round the bread He was thinking of His imminent death and wished to associate His disciples with it ; when He passed round the cup He was looking to His victory and associated His friends with His glorification. So we must be careful not to disregard the eschatological element revealed in the passing round of the cup since the celebration of the Last Supper was, for Jesus and His friends, rich with a double meaning : with the thought of His abasement unto death which was the foundation of the new covenant — and the certainty of His ascension into glory which would hereafter be the source of life flooding all who shared in the new dispensation.

While the passing round of the bread enabled the disciples to understand the beginning of the new dispensation, the passing round of the cup gave them a glimpse of the final blessing : the fullness of communion they would find with their Saviour in the Kingdom of God. Here once more words and actions only find their true meaning because a group of men made it their own. As they drank the cup which passed from one to another of them the disciples began to understand that they were

different from other men because they formed a community which found its meaning in the glorious life of their Lord.

A new Israel

We have hitherto used the word covenant on several occasions without precisely explaining its meaning in the narrative of the Last Supper. We must turn to the Old Testament to find the explanation. There we find that covenant means God's plan for His people. It is the initiative of love by which God restored between Himself and men the relationship which sin had broken. It is the divine intervention of God by which the course of men's lives, which had hitherto tended towards death, is so diverted that henceforward they move towards life. It was in this sense that Jesus used the word covenant during the Last Supper. He wished to make His disciples understand that God had intervened in Him and changed the course of their lives. By His obedience unto death and by His victory over sin — that event which was at once new and unique in history — believers would be restored before God to their relation of children to a father. And so the bread and the cup were given to bring home to the mind of the believers the reality of that covenant. By sharing the bread, by drinking the cup, they grasped by material signs the reality of the salvation through which believers who share in the death of their Lord were also associated in His eternal life. The close relationship between this idea of the covenant and the acts and words of the Last Supper showed the believers that everything which took place in that hour of solemn import concerned each of them directly. The full love of God for His people, which was revealed in the old covenant through the history of the deliverance of Israel, now attained its fulness and its finality in the sacrifice of Jesus. So it was a new people who set forward on their

way delivered from slavery, it was a new Israel, a new people of God represented by the little community of the disciples.

In chapter ten of the first Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul points out that the eucharistic act reveals that those who celebrate belong to one body of which Christ is the Head. So the eucharistic elements are further pledges of the organic bond which unites the believers to one another and the Church to its Head. Participation in the Supper of the Lord proves the existence of this new organism whose members are the believers and whose Head is Christ. The bread and the cup, while preserving their commonplace nature, show at the same time in a perfectly clear way that those who eat and drink of them are being nourished by the supernatural love of Christ. So the Holy Communion is an opportunity for the community to reveal its organic membership with Christ. In this way the believers declare themselves in the midst and before the eyes of the world as a distinct social group whose existence is not due to any historical factor, but rather to the definite fact of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It is here that we must start if we wish to understand the reproaches addressed by St. Paul to the Corinthians as well as the serious warning in chapter eleven against an unworthy participation in the Eucharist. Those who think they can find nourishment elsewhere than at the Table of the Lord show that they have not understood the full extent of the grace offered to them. For true believers there is only one possibility of receiving life and of being fully satisfied: it is to accept the pardon of Jesus Christ and particularly the signs of it which He gave those who sat with Him at the Table. So the apostle shows that the Last Supper is a manifestation of the concrete, organic communion of believers with one another and with their Lord. This community represents

a new organism animated by a flow of new life : the life given by the risen Lord to His Church.

The bread of life

The witness of St. John, to whom we have not yet referred, brings another contribution of great value. It is recognized that chapter six gives a kind of commentary on the Last Supper. We cannot enter here upon a complete study of this chapter, but it is worth pointing out that the gift of the bread of life re-emphasizes the striking contrast between the unbeliever and the believer. Indeed on the one hand the Jews remained unable to grasp the meaning of this gift of Jesus and were scandalized by His words, while on the other hand the believers, thanks to their faith, were able, while they ate the bread, to understand that it was the body of Jesus which nourished them ; they understood that they were really able to find nourishment in the fruit of His death. It was by this means that John brought out for his readers the meaning of the sacrament. The believers understood that Jesus had to abase Himself to the supreme sacrifice and that one day the love of God would enter wholly into the body of the Crucified so that from then on men might live by the life of the glorified Lord. When they received the eucharistic elements the believers grasped this truth concretely : God had come to introduce into the darkened history of the world the shining reality of His love. Now in the Fourth Gospel there is a link between what is said about the Eucharist and what is said about the Church. Let us try to find it. When he had spoken about the Holy Communion in chapter six John did not, like the Synoptics, carry back the institution of it to the moment of the Last Supper. However, chapter thirteen, in which we see the Master washing the feet of His disciples, reveals a preoccupation with the sacraments, and verse ten in particular contains an allusion

to baptism. What is of importance here is to notice that this passage opens the series of Jesus' last talks with His followers as if John wished that the readers of chapters fourteen and seventeen should have in their mind the idea of the sacrament. Now these last conversations end with the priestly prayer in which Jesus interceded for the unity of believers (vs. 20-23) and in which the community appears as a group distinct from the rest of the world (vs. 6, 9, 14, 16), living by the love of its glorified Lord (vs. 24-26). It seems that there must be some continuity in St. John's line of thought. We see the link between the gift of the bread of life and the unity of believers. Those who eat the bread of the Eucharist in a material sense are also spiritually nourished, since Jesus had brought to His followers the nourishment of eternal life by His willingness to give His body for the world. And since all believers receive in this food the same power of life they must be one in the eyes of the world and the love of the glorified Christ.

The sacrament of unity

The Book of the Acts of the Apostles seems to lay particular insistence upon the atmosphere of joy and thanksgiving in which the Lord's Supper was celebrated (Acts 2: 42-47). This could easily be understood, for the community was aware that it received there the grace of its risen Saviour who in the spiritual sense sat at the head of the Table. The reason for their joy is also explained by the eschatological meaning of the Eucharist. The gift which was there given to the community was in anticipation of the fullness of joy which it would receive on the day of the coming of the Lord.

Following the line of the books of the New Testament attention must be paid to the ancient eucharistic liturgy of the *Didache*. We find in it that there is a link between

the celebration of the sacrament and the eschatological element and the prayer for the unity of the Church. This is how the believers pray: "As this broken bread which was scattered upon the mountains has been gathered together and now is made one, even so gather together thy Church from the ends of the earth unto thy Kingdom" (Ch. 9 : 1). And further on: "O Lord remember thy people, and free it from all evil and make it perfect in thy love, and gather it together from the four winds, sanctify it for thy Kingdom which thou hast prepared for it" (Ch. 10 : 1). But what is more characteristic still of this liturgy is the invocation *Maranatha*. This Aramaic term can be translated either "Come, O Lord", that is to say, "Lord, be present in our midst", or by "The Lord cometh", that is to say, "We are waiting for the final revelation of Him who is already present in the spirit." The miracle of the Eucharist is that it should be made clear to the community, throughout the whole time that the old dispensation continues to exist, that the new dispensation has already begun, under which men are united by one power, the power of the living Lord who gives His life to His followers.

Thus we can say that the eucharistic act, every time it is performed anew in the community, contains three essential elements: whenever the believers partake of the Holy Communion, they know that they are *at that moment* in communion with their Saviour, because *in the past* Jesus gave His life for His friends. But this present certainty is for them also a pledge of *the future*: they know that in the Kingdom of God they shall sit at the Table of the Lord. The repeating of the words and the acts of Jesus which bear this triple meaning renews for each generation the proclamation of the events of the Cross and of the Resurrection, a proclamation which has all the more power because those who take part are in communion with the life of their Lord.

The sacrament of Holy Communion was for the primitive community the basis of its unity. Indeed the believers understood, as did the Jews before them at the Passover feast, that the life of all of them found its common origin in the deliverance accomplished for them by their Saviour. Like Israel of old, at the moment of Passover, the new Israel knows at the moment of the celebration of Holy Communion that the community can only live by the grace of God. But furthermore the sacrament of Holy Communion is the means by which the community expresses its unity in the face of the world. Indeed it is by sharing in this concrete common act that the believers show their fellow men that they draw their life from one single source. Built and expressed in this way, the common life of believers is seen in its entirety, as wholly dependent upon its Saviour, since it is from His hand today, as yesterday and forever, that they receive their true nourishment. Finally the joy of the believers is of necessity clearly seen at the moment of the celebration of the sacrament. The sacrament cannot be received except in common joy for the deliverance accomplished by their Saviour, in common rejoicing in the actual presence of their Master, and in common expectation of the glorious manifestation of their Lord. In the unity of one faith the believers of the Church eat the bread and drink of the cup, nourishing themselves and quenching their thirst today by the life which Christ won for them on the Cross and to which He welcomes them in the Kingdom of God.

Let Us Break Bread Together

ROBERT S. BILHEIMER

On the first Sunday of each month, according to our tradition, our small Presbyterian congregation gathers from out of the semi-slum Negro community of South Jamaica, Long Island, to celebrate the Holy Supper of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The service of Holy Communion is preceded by the Sunday service of worship which moves each time according to the same pattern of preparation for communion. At the conclusion of the brief sermon, the invitation to partake is extended to "all who humbly put their trust in Christ, and desire His help that they may lead a holy life, all that are truly sorry for their sins and would be delivered from the burden of them."

We are reminded that the Lord instituted the sacrament for the memory of His dying for us and as a pledge of His love, as a bond of our union with Him and each other in His body, as a seal of His promises to us and a renewal of our obedience to Him, for the assurance of His presence with us, and as a pledge of His coming again. We are invited to pray with those great thoughts of Paul: "For this cause let us bow our knees unto the Father... that He would grant us according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith..." We sing the central hymn: "When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died...", and there follow the words: "I have received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed..." We

pray together, asking for a pure heart, for the blessing of the Father upon the bread and wine — “these thine own gifts which we set before thee” — and that He will accept “ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice.” The elders, who are ordained men and women, take the bread from the minister, who gives it to them and so to the congregation in the name of Christ, and it is distributed to all who will receive. As it is being distributed, a solo voice sings the Negro spiritual :

Let us break bread together on our knees
Let us break bread together on our knees
When I fall on my knees, with my face to
the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us drink wine together on our knees
Let us drink wine together on our knees
When I fall on my knees, with my face to
the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

Let us praise God together on our knees
Let us praise God together on our knees
When I fall on my knees with my face to
the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy if you please.

“Take, eat, this is my body...” The wine is distributed in the same fashion, and as it is given to the congregation, one voice takes up the hymn, “Just as I am, without one plea”, to be joined by another voice, and finally the whole congregation, the voices swelling in the earnestness of the prayer. “... my blood. Drink ye all of it.” We join in a simple prayer of thanksgiving, and then “after we have sung a hymn”, we go out.

Fellowship in faith

I suppose that the word sacrament immediately calls up some image or impression in our minds whenever it is mentioned. The service in our church has become so deep in its meaning for me that mention of communion makes my mind revert to it at once. Different circumstances, distance and time seem to make no difference; the memory, whenever it is called up, refreshes my soul. Holy Communion is therefore not something about which I am eager to dogmatise; it transcends dogma, even when this dogma is reverently conceived and stated, and it is so different from our arguments about it in our churches as to make these arguments seem cheap and shabby affairs. I am able only to testify as to what it means to me, confessing in a poor way to the reality of a thing which I cannot comprehend.

What is involved in Holy Communion? I feel quite clear that the sacraments call for certain spiritual conditions. We are not faced with something which happens in isolation from everything else; the sacrament is no star to which individuals hitch themselves through ecclesiastical astrology. Rather it is duly administered, that is to say it comes alive, when it is celebrated within a certain setting: the setting of faith, created not by our desire or effort, but by God's grace. We do not conjure up faith by hearing the Word of God or by eating the bread and drinking the wine, or by wishing for it, even on our knees. It is given to us. This is the awesome mystery, in which we stand and which we cannot comprehend: the meaning of this sacrament is contingent upon faith which itself is given to us, freely, and therefore is not the result of our actions and desires. It is important to be quite clear about the difference between the meaning of the sacrament and the sacrament itself. Our point is not that the sacrament as such is contingent upon conditions in the hearts of those who receive it, but that its meaning to them is wholly so. The trust, dedication, and above all openness of soul which are all involved in

faith spell the difference between His knocking at a closed door at the moment of communion and His entering into the darkened house.

Yet faith itself is awakened within a context, and not in isolation. It springs up in the soul because in some form God has spoken to it in words that it can understand, and because it has been touched and has responded to some degree of fellowship with another trusting and dedicated person. God may speak directly from the Bible, or he may speak through a person whose thought has been moulded by the Bible. The experience of Christian fellowship may come through an ancient and honored congregation or through contact between two Christians far from any congregation. We are not concerned at all to argue or even try to explore *why* faith is evoked in a context of Word and fellowship. The fact is that it appears to be so. If one were so minded, it might be possible to draw the parallel between the life, death and resurrection gathered up in the person of Christ and the Word, sacrament and fellowship gathered up in the life of the Church. In whatever fashion it is expressed, the reality of communion through the sacrament involves God's word, Christian fellowship and faith, each so inextricably enmeshed with the other that it is difficult to distinguish between them even in idea, and impossible to place them in any kind of order, either of logic or time. Viewed objectively, it is one event. Viewed subjectively, it is one experience, in which the different aspects each form the setting for the others.

He is present

During the service of communion, I am conscious of being a sinful man in the presence of his Redeemer. Yet I feel that there is here a movement of the soul from its human condition to the presence of God, back and forth in an alternation which somehow gathers in intensity of movement so that ultimately there is no movement and God takes possession. We are not transfigured, to be sure,

but we are taken hold of, so that in a real sense there is no longer a distance between us and the Redeemer but an identity between the two. As the service begins and progresses we are reminded of Christ on the Cross and we pray for our own cleansing. We think of the Father of Whom the whole family is named and of ourselves and of Christ living in our hearts by faith. The music heightens our aspiration and deepens our penitence: we praise God together, but on our knees. And as we eat and drink we feel and taste, but we also know by virtue of the faith which has been given to us that these tangible things are the signs of a Presence who works an inner cleansing and power. The movement of alternation virtually stops, for it is here that we know Christ within us.

We know that Christ is present in the sacrament, as language goes. How He is so makes little or no difference. The thing that matters is what it means for us that He is present. It means, even though we can scarcely analyse it at the time, and even though our analysis afterwards is stiff and dry, that a death has taken place, the death of our former self, and that because this death has happened, a new thing has come to be, namely that Christ has begun to dwell in us. We have not just swept the old spirits out. Thank God, for they would return sevenfold. We have a new life within us and that new life is Christ. It happens each time, with greater vividness in so far as our trust has been deepened and our dedication been constant, in so far, that is, as we have grown in the grace which has been given to us. But each time it is also new, and happens almost as though it had not happened before.

There is also a curious element of suspense in communion. We become aware that this is not all there is. On the face of it, communion should be the climax of Christian life. Is not this the very center of the whole process by which we become transformed into the likeness of Christ? Is not this where, if anywhere in this life, we shall become "perfect even as our Father in

heaven is perfect" ? Yet it is not so, and not simply because our human sinfulness runs so deep. Here we become aware that Christ will come again. It is only upon reflection and not during communion that we are tempted to speculate about when and how He will come. Such questions do not bother us then. We simply know that He will come, and that even the heights of this communion are but a foretaste of that promised life which will be born when He does come. In communion there is a kind of identity between the human soul and the Divine Redeemer, but it is one which breeds suspense in the knowledge that an ultimate climax is yet to come.

A unique presence

As the parting hymn is sung, one knows that the experience is unique. There is no other part of Christian life of worship which is like it. It stands alone. Arguments which try to explain the matter in terms of the long tradition behind the eucharistic rite or in terms of the intensity of the psychological experience are of little significance, except as they help us locate the unique quality of the communion in the right place. They do not detract from this quality.

Yet the communion, as we have tried to state, does not stand alone in the sense that it is isolated. Quite the contrary, it is part and parcel of the whole of Christian worship and life, and interdependent with other aspects of them both. There is in the sacrament a quality of uniqueness *and* interdependence which all but defies analysis. The closest that I can come to identifying the specific character of the sacrament is to say : Christ is always present in the sacrament, and His presence is always apprehended in some fashion where there is faith. The fact that faith exists or does not exist in the hearts of the people does not affect the presence of Christ in the sacrament. He is there. We will all testify that Christ is present also when the Word is preached and

where it is heard in faith, and where there is Christian fellowship and it is received in faith. On these grounds some do not believe that Christ is uniquely present in the sacrament. There is no way, I suppose, through discussion and argument to settle the matter, but I believe that the presence of Christ in the Word and in the fellowship is rather a mark of the continuity of the sacrament with the Word and with fellowship than a denial of the fact that Christ is uniquely present in the sacrament. The fact of this continuity between these elements would enable one to believe that Christ is also uniquely present in the Word, but in a different manner from that in which He is present in sacrament and fellowship. Again and again one comes back to the fact that we are dealing with a whole to which violence is done whenever any part is held up for analysis. The most one can say is that in the communion one meets the Lord, and that this meeting is different from other meetings with Him and thus unique. One must, of course, not be beguiled into thinking that this meeting will follow a given pattern or stereotype. It will vary with the individual, and from service to service. There may be a deep emotional accompaniment; there may be a comparatively dry and "unsatisfactory" experience; aspiration and exhilaration at one time may be followed with deep shame and repentance at another. Response may be immediate or it may be long delayed. These feelings make no difference to the basic truth. The fact is that a sinful man has met his Saviour.

The sacrament in the church

In our church in South Jamaica, we have a larger attendance on the first Sunday of the month than on any other Sunday. This has happened without fail, rain or shine, summer and winter, for the four years I have been with this church. When all of the ideas about the desire of the people for ceremony, a more liturgical service, and normal sentiment about the communion are

talked out, one is still led to inquire whether there is anything deeper in this fact of larger attendance at communion. Ours is a reasonably active church, in which life centers around Sunday worship, evangelism in the community, and activities which consciously or unconsciously are designed to deepen the fellowship between the members. One important fact is that all of the activities are carried on wholly by laymen, except of course the conduct of the Sunday morning service. My feeling is that the attendance at communion is due largely to the probably unconscious feeling upon the part of the congregation that whatever else they attend, they must attend communion because of its importance for their spiritual life, and further that they attend communion so regularly because in a sense it completes their participation in the church.

People can afford, perhaps, to miss a preaching service and a prayer meeting and certainly a committee. But in the sacrament there is something which is not found elsewhere and which is indispensable. Here they are gathered in a community of worshipping people so vivid as to be almost tangible; here they think of their loved ones who are dead and are led in this personal way to think of the communion of saints; here they meet the Cross in a way not possible through the Word or the life of the fellowship; here there comes over them the power of Christ the Lord, that power which does the impossible, which removes the stain of guilt and gives newness to life. Something is here which is present nowhere else, and this something adds a fulness and completeness to their Christian life. It is not enough to work on evangelistic committees; nor to do this and to attend the services of prayer and preaching; nor to do both and participate in the fellowship of the church. A quality is somehow missed in all of this; a quality which ultimately defies description. The parting hymn which we sing alludes to the time when we shall "know as we are known". In the sacrament this is foreshadowed, there is a deeply personal meeting with an objective

presence which completes and crowns the life of Christian work and worship.

Perhaps it is not too much to say also that in communion we partake of the entire experience of the church. Here there is the Lord ; here there is the continuity provided by the Lord in the fellowship of the faithful — “all one body we” ; here there is the new life, forgiven and powerful ; here there is future expectancy. We eat of the body and drink of the blood, but in this eating and drinking we are a part of the faithful to whom Christ has been, is now and shall be present. The essentials of the Church’s life are gathered up here. We therefore go forth from the sacrament with song : “The path our dear Redeemer trod, may we rejoicing tread.”

The Church's Sacrifice

WILLIAM NICHOLLS

Formulated catholic doctrine lays before us three essential facts about the Eucharist. It is a sacrifice, the Church's sacrifice, in which we offer ourselves to God in union with Christ's own offering of Himself, by "representing" before the Father the one sacrifice of Christ once offered. Thus there is a real sacrifice, for which Christ is really present in the consecrated bread and wine which we offer. And in receiving these elements in communion we receive union with Christ and participation in all the fruits of the sacrifice. My task is to explain something of the meaning which "catholics" see in these facts, and of the implications which they have for the life of the Church in the world. I write as a "catholic", but the majority of my readers will be "protestants"¹. Thus my task is doubly difficult because of the risk of misunderstanding. I shall do my best to make myself understood. But of course I cannot claim complete understanding myself. No individual in himself can possess the whole, that is, in the true sense of the word, the *catholic* truth. That is why I may dare to speak, knowing that if I can contribute even a little to ecumenical insight I shall have done all that is required of me.

The Christian sacrifice

The first thing to say about the Eucharist, then, is that it is the Church's sacrifice. This is the most important fact about it in the eyes of "catholics", and the

¹ I use both these words in quotation marks in the sense given to them by the report of Commission I at Amsterdam.

foundation of everything else that must be said. But we cannot forget that the Church has always found it difficult to say this without falling into dangerous errors. In the very earliest years of the Church, when sacrifice, in a deadly and idolatrous form, was part of daily life outside the Church, there was much perplexity as to whether it was right to speak of the Eucharist as a sacrifice at all. It was clear that, if so, the Church meant something very different from what the pagans meant. The intellectuals of the Church shared to a great extent views common among pagan intellectuals of the time, who were strongly of the opinion that God needs no sacrifice, but thanksgiving and prayer. Thus the Eucharist came to be called an "unbloody sacrifice", or our "spiritual worship", and to be identified with the "pure offering" prophesied by Malachi, that would be offered every day among the Gentiles. The Eucharist was naturally contrasted with the Jewish sacrifices condemned by the prophets; at the same time it was seen as fulfilling them; cf. St. Thomas Aquinas' eucharistic hymn — "types and shadows have their ending, for the newer rite is here". Nor can we forget that in mediaeval times the theologians stated, or mis-stated, the faith of the Church in so offensive a way that the Reformers thought it necessary to deny the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist altogether. The formularies of my own church condemn these mediaeval opinions in the strongest terms.

It must be recognised quite frankly that it is possible to misunderstand the meaning of the Eucharist in such a way that the prophetic protest against sacrifices becomes entirely relevant. The Eucharist is not an offering which sinful man brings to God in his own right. There is no such offering which he could make; even the attempt to make it heaps blasphemy upon blasphemy. There is only one Christian sacrifice, the sacrifice of Christ crucified, risen and ascended, which He ever presents before

the Father in His heavenly priesthood. "When Christ came into the world he said : Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me ; in burnt offerings and sin-offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said : Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God, as it is written of me in the roll of the book... And by that will we have been consecrated by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (Hebrews 10 : 5-7, 10, and see the whole passage.)

The consecration of which the writer to the Hebrews speaks is the reconstitution of Israel as the Catholic Church. The Church then owes her very existence to the one sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all. That sacrifice, by which the Church lives, abolished all other sacrifices, and established the true sacrifice once for all. The Eucharist does not originate in a movement from man to God, in an attempt to bridge the gulf created by sin. It originates in God's gracious act in sending the Son to offer Himself as a voluntary sacrifice for the sins of the world. Christ our high priest has bridged the gulf Himself. Henceforward there is no question of approaching God in our own right. If we were not the Church, we could not rightly begin even the first prayer of the Eucharist. But as the Church we are able to approach Him, because by our baptism we have all been made partakers of the death and resurrection of Christ, made members of His Body, sharers in a permanent communion between man and God set up by God Himself, and here thereby renounced all standing before God but that which He gives us in justifying us freely by His grace.

If the Eucharist is not a manifestation of the one sacrifice of Christ, it is nothing. It is indeed shocking to our ears to be told that we have to offer Christ to God, and that we can do nothing else. But we must be careful lest we so state this faith that men will be scandalised for

quite the wrong reasons. The true scandal of the Eucharist is the scandal of the Incarnation and the Cross, which challenges our whole natural understanding of God and ourselves. When we stand at the foot of the Cross, we can be in only two relations to the Crucified. We cannot stand aside in indifference, as if what is going on had nothing to do with us, for it is our sin which is crucifying Him. We can be of those who slay the Son of God, murderers of Christ ; or we can be of those who understand what is happening, who fall at His feet in penitence and love, yet will not now arrest His death, because they know that "no one takes His life from Him, but He lays it down of His own accord", as a sacrifice for their sins and the sins of the world. The most shocking paradox of the Christian faith is that we must now will this death that we have caused, that our only hope is to offer Him to God, as He, at once our priest and victim, offers Himself. We cannot begin to think of offering ourselves until we offer Him. Even that offering of ourselves is, as we shall see, a part of His offering of Himself. The firm insistence of traditional Christianity on the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, rightly understood, may remain shocking to some, but it has no other purpose than to safeguard this supremely evangelical truth that we cannot approach God except in the offering of Christ.

The "re-presentation" of the one sacrifice

The Eucharist is in the first place our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to God for all His acts of redeeming love, whereby He has made us a royal priesthood, a kingdom of priests, able to offer Him acceptable worship. The earliest liturgies ring with the joy of this fact, and when they recite before God the long tale of His gracious dealings with men, they do not forget to give

thanks that He has accounted His people worthy to stand before Him as priests and offer Him this sacrifice. The very name of Eucharist means "thanksgiving". But if what we have said is true, even an offering of thanksgiving must mean the offering of Christ, for we have nothing else to offer. "Nothing in my hand I bring." How then can our Eucharist to-day be the offering of the sacrifice made 1900 years ago in Palestine?

Our Lord told us to "do this in remembrance of Him", and St. Paul tells us that in every Eucharist "we proclaim the Lord's death till He come." The background of these words lies deep in the Old Testament, and we may be excused from tracing it here. But it is against this background that "catholics" understand the Greek word *anamnesis* which is used in the Gospels for "remembrance", to mean "re-calling", "re-presenting", before God as well as before man. What we do in the Eucharist is to re-call, to re-present before God the one sacrifice of Christ. In other terms, not essentially different in meaning, we may say that what the Church does on earth is the sacramental manifestation of what Christ our high priest does in heaven. It is the earthly embodiment, or making visible in a corporate action, of His intercession in the heavenly places.

In His present state of glory He contains within Himself all the states and acts of His earthly life, the birth at Bethlehem, the death on the Cross on Calvary, the resurrection from the empty tomb, the ascension from Mount Olivet. He contains within Himself also the Kingdom, which He will bring at His return. But the glorious Body which shall be revealed then still bears the "dazzling scars" of His passion. In the Eucharist Christ is present with us in His death, yet not as dying only but as risen and victorious over principalities and powers. By His presence in the sacramental action He brings with Him all these saving acts and events. Time

is overcome, and we are simultaneously present at both comings of the Lord, who contains all the time of the Kingdom within Himself. As we offer the bread and the cup to the Father, "having in remembrance His blessed passion and precious death, as also His mighty resurrection and glorious ascension, and looking forward to His coming again on the clouds of heaven with great joy", all these events are present, beneath the veil of the Church's acts. Christ our high priest offers Himself to the Father for the sins of the whole world. His body and blood are offered, really present upon the altar, in the separation which sacramentally presents His death. They are offered to the Father and distributed to the Church. The Church feeds on and enters into the sacrifice which is her life, and receives the presence of the Kingdom in this world.

The offering of the Body

St. Paul tells us in Romans 12 that we render our "spiritual worship" by the "offering of our bodies, as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God." That is to say, in other language, that we have to surrender our wills to God — "Lo, I have come to do Thy will, O God" — and so present to him our personalities, our whole selves. This is our spiritual worship. How is it related to the Eucharist, which the Church also calls "our spiritual worship"? These two offerings, Christ's and ours, which seem so different, are not unrelated to each other. Indeed, if we think of them apart from one another, there is a sense in which both are rendered meaningless. If Christ's offering remained in isolation, without fruit in transformed lives, we could hardly speak of it as a victory over sin. It would not have restored men to the fullness of a true relation with God, in which they glorify Him by obedience and love. But the consequences are even

worse if we think of our offering apart from His, as something added to it, as if it were not sufficient, or as if we could offer at all by ourselves. The truth is rather that in the life of the Church the two offerings become one. As we offer ourselves we come to share in His offering of Himself; or rather our offering of ourselves is really His offering of Himself in us. We offer ourselves in Him: He offers Himself in us. And we offer Him by sharing in His offering, by the offering of ourselves. The meaning of the Eucharist is that it is the place in the Church's life at which these facts are explicitly acted out, and made effective again for that life. It is the union in a "mystery", or sacrament, of the one sacrifice of Christ, of which the quotation from Hebrews 10 speaks, and our spiritual worship, of which the quotation from Romans 12 speaks.

Thus the Eucharist is the offering of "the whole Christ", of the members along with the head. In the action of the liturgy itself, the laying of the bread and wine upon the altar represents the Church's part in the offering of the body, just as the offering of this same bread and wine after consecration represents Christ's part, and consecration and communion the union of the two. The congregation can take part in the ceremony of the offertory in various ways, by themselves offering a piece of bread at the altar rails, in imitation of the practice of the ancient Church, by the offering of money, which is a commutation of the offering in kind of bread and wine, and by prayer. It is well that the meaning of this fundamental action of the liturgy should be made plain by well planned ceremonial action, and that the congregation should actively identify themselves with it by whatever method seems best. But it is also well to remember that we do not live the liturgical life by ceremonial, not even by frequent and devout attendance at the Holy Mysteries. Our desks or the kitchen sink are

often closer to God's altar than a pew in church. It is our whole week that we bring to the altar on Sunday. We live the liturgical life by the consecration of that week, and in response to the love of God we want to make Him the best offering that we can, well as we know that there is always a tremendous deficit, that Christ alone makes up. Thus the ceaseless labour of prayer and meditation and self-denial, the continual dying to self in the common life, the vigilant discharge of our social responsibilities, to which our Christian profession obliges us, all that is summed up in the phrase "Christian obedience", are linked in the Eucharist to Christ's own offering, and thereby given their only Christian significance.

Priesthood and intercession

From this point we can see the true meaning of priesthood. There is only one Christian priesthood, that of Christ. It is sacramentally mediated to the Church in different modes, according to the "order" of the church to which each Christian belongs. All are members of the royal priesthood, and all who are in Christ are priests to the world. But we may speak of the ordained ministry as priests in a special sense, as priests *par excellence*, without denying the priesthood of all believers, which is a doctrine as much "catholic" as "protestant". Holy orders do not confer on the priest a special power conceived of as separate from the priesthood of the whole body. That sacrament initiates him into a new kind of union with Christ in His priesthood, enables him to live out in the body a special kind of life, to perform a special "operation" in the power of "the same spirit". What that function is is seen most clearly in the action of the sacraments, and especially in the eucharistic drama, in which the priest plays the part of Christ Himself.

But the priest is part of the Church, though an indispensable part. In the eucharistic offering, when the whole church is assembled together, each has his part to play, and all the parts are necessary to the whole. The whole Church is God's priest to the world, and each order takes a different share in the offering of worship and intercession. The Church has always forbidden the offering of the Eucharist when no members of the laity are present. The sacrifice is the Church's sacrifice, and requires the presence and participation of both ministry and laity.

The heart of all priesthood is intercession. In the Eucharist the Church is united in the closest manner to the intercession of the High Priest. His offering of Himself is also the supreme intercession for the whole world. The pattern of intercession is self-offering to God for the sake of others, "with intention", as "catholics" say. That is why the Eucharist is for "catholics" the supreme occasion of intercession for the world. As our offering is taken up into the offering of Christ, it becomes part of His intercession, and to the degree in which we are united with Him and His will of love, our intercession prevails with God. We come to the Eucharist with the needs of the world in our hearts, and as we lay our offering upon God's altar, we think of the need we have in mind. We offer with "a special intention" for that need. And so our tiny bit of love is taken up into the love of Christ, purged of impurity and given the infinite value of His love. At every Eucharist the Church brings before God her own needs and those of the world. Sometimes too the Eucharist is specially offered for a particular need, with an "intention" publicly announced, in order that our intercession may become Christ's. In the profoundest sense eucharistic intercession is "asking in His name". The Eucharist is the heart of the Church's ministry to the world, as ever and again the crying needs

of a fallen world are lifted up to God in the power of Christ's sacrifice. Even the intercession of individual Christians in their private prayers is but a part of the great eucharistic intercession of the Holy Church throughout all the world.

Communion and the redeemed society

We have spoken much of the eucharistic sacrifice and little so far of communion. This is because communion presupposes sacrifice, and cannot be understood without it. But it is also true that nowadays there is little difference in faith about communion, between "catholics" and those "protestants" at least who have been influenced by the theological revival of our time. Communion for the "catholic" is the consummation of the sacrifice. We do not truly enter into the sacrifice when we do not communicate. For it is here that we are most fully united with the living Christ. Here the Church receives her true life, and her unity in Him, here the individual receives the holy food which is the necessary nourishment of the spiritual life of union with Christ initiated at his baptism. Here the Church receives power to glorify God in her corporate life. She receives her Lord with thanksgiving and joy and is dismissed to her mission in the world, the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom, and the redemption of society. The Roman Mass ends with the words *Ite, missa est*, which may be translated, "Go, you have your mission".

The Eucharist does not exist for the sake of this mission. It might be truer, if we wished to make such a contrast, to say that the mission exists for the sake of the Eucharist, since like it the Eucharist exists for the glory of God and it is by means of the Eucharist that we offer our missionary endeavour to His glory. The Eucharist is the centre of the Church's life. But it is from this

centre that all else radiates ; it is a dynamic centre from which the life of Christ moves out into the world in power. As we communicants go about our mission in our daily life, we carry Christ into our contemporary world, and as we let Him transform us by His presence within us, our common life and our social relations begin to manifest something of the charity of God. "We bear about in our bodies the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies." Our whole lives can become a witness to the Gospel when we let the life of Christ flow through all that we do. The whole life of the Church in the world is eucharistic, filled with the fullness of Christ. That fullness is intended to overflow far beyond the life of the congregation and spread out to every corner of the world and every part of society.

In itself the Eucharist offers a pattern of the redeemed society. When men are brought into union with God they are brought also into unity with each other. We come to God with all our differences of race and class, of talents and attainments, and all are offered to God together in the one offering. Our differences remain but they are brought into harmony, made creative, a source of rich diversity rather than division and impoverishment. What one has is available for each and all. More profoundly still, we learn at the altar rails the true equality of all men before God. Whoever we may be, we eat the one bread and drink the one cup. The communist ideal is that each shall contribute according to his abilities, and each receive according to his needs. The truth in that ideal is fulfilled and transcended in the Eucharist, when each brings what he can of his use and misuse of the gifts of God in creation, and each receives the fullness of the living Christ and eternal life. The raw material of our offering is God's. He gives the wheat and the grapes. We have made them into bread

and wine. He makes them the body and blood of Christ without destroying their nature as bread and wine. So too with all His gifts. If we bring our use of them to God, He will make them a source of blessing to the world. Every time the Church celebrates the Eucharist, she obliges herself before God to live as the redeemed society, and receives power to do so. The Church is to be a nucleus of right relationships, a leaven which may transform the lump.

A sacrament of hope

One last word may be said. The eucharistic life is life in Christ. It is therefore life in the central thread and meaning of all history. Every Eucharist brings the Kingdom closer. Our union with Christ in the eucharistic action of worship and the common life speeds up the movement of history towards its predestined climax in the return of Christ in glory. He who is to come is He who has come, and comes to us in every Eucharist, and comes to the world of to-day in us. This is our solemn and incredible privilege, for which we gladly pay whatever His love exacts. The sacrament of love is the sacrament of hope, not only for us, but for the world.

Lord's Supper or Church's Supper

EDMUND SCHLINK

This question is the expression of the great confusion and desperate need of contemporary Christianity. It contains a multiplicity of problems. If I attempted to deal systematically with them, let alone to answer them, it would require a book rather than the space to which I am limited. I therefore want to confine myself to a chain of thought in the form of a few theses, which I can only prove in part in this context, making quite clear the incomplete character of the following analysis.

The Lord's Supper

The celebration of the Lord's Supper takes place between the meal Jesus shared with his disciples "in the night in which He was betrayed", and the meal to come in the Kingdom of God, which the returning Lord will enjoy with His own. Both these meals are mentioned by Jesus in the words of institution of the Holy Communion. We share in both at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. As according to the word of Jesus the gift of the Maundy Thursday meal consisted in His body and His blood, so also the body and blood of the Crucified is the gift which the risen Lord grants us in the Lord's Supper. As the gift of the meal in the Kingdom of God will be the joy as it were of a wedding feast, of eternal communion of the resurrected faithful with the returned Lord, so in the Lord's Supper we already share here on earth in that future glory. In the Lord's Supper we are present at the death of Christ and at His return, at His first and second advent.

The Lord's Supper is "the communion of the body of Christ" (I Cor. 10 : 16). Those who partake of the body and blood of Christ are made one body with Him. Through His gift of His body and His blood the risen Lord is building up on earth His body, the Church. As there is *one* Lord, *one* Church, *one* body, fellowship at the Lord's Supper belongs to the essence of the Church. "Since there is one loaf we who are many are one body, for we all share in that one loaf" (I Cor. 10 : 17).

The celebration of the Lord's Supper takes place during the Church's pilgrimage from the first to the second advent. The Church has preserved the Apostles' records of Christ's institution of the Lord's Supper ; it prepares the meal in which the crucified and returning Lord gives Himself to us. It calls us to that Supper to which the Lord Himself bids us through its invitation. Thus the Church is not only built up in the Lord's Supper ; ever since it was built on the foundation of the Apostles by the pouring out of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, it has been prior to our celebrations of the Lord's Supper.

The Church rightly excludes from the Lord's Supper those who are not yet or no longer members of the Church, either because they have rejected the baptism whereby the sinner is "baptised into Christ Jesus" (Romans 6 : 3), "baptised into one body" (I Cor. 12 : 13), thus becoming a member of the Church ; or because, having been baptised, they have fallen away from Christ through unbelief or wickedness.

Lord's Supper or Church's Supper ?

There is no legitimate "either-or", for the Lord's Supper is essentially the meal of fellowship of the body of Christ and therefore of the Church. Lord's Supper and Church's Supper are not opposed to each other. This however only holds good as long as the Church remaining the receiver hands on the tradition of the institution of the Lord's Supper, prepares its celebration

and "proclaims the Lord's death till He come" (I Cor. 11 : 26). Faith, in spite of all wrestling and calling, clinging and confessing, is essentially an act of receiving; so with the dispensation of the Lord's Supper through the Church. The Church is the place, the creation and the instrument of the Lord's Supper but never its Lord. For that reason the New Testament calls the Last Supper "the Lord's Supper", not "the Church's Supper", and certainly it testifies that the body of Christ is the gift of the Supper as well as the reality of the Church.

The "either-or" of Lord's Supper or Church's Supper presupposes a certain degeneration. On the one hand, this can consist in seeing in the Lord's Supper solely a gift of Christ to the individual, giving it an individualistic misinterpretation. In that case the nature of the Church as the fellowship of Christ created through the common reception of the body of Christ is disregarded and the gulf between the Church and the world, or rather between Church and pseudo-Church is overlooked. In that case we must ask whether this is still the Lord's Supper. On the other hand, we find degeneration where the Church departs from its function as receiver and server of the Lord's Supper and makes itself lord of the Lord's Supper. This can happen through self-invented doctrines of the Holy Communion, through arbitrary orders for celebration or through an autocratic practice of admission to and exclusion from Holy Communion etc., in short, through supplementing and distorting the apostolic tradition. Here again we have to ask whether this is still a celebration of the Lord's Supper or whether the Church has not become assimilated to the world's religion. This "either-or" can only apply to a distorted Lord's Supper and a distorted Church's Supper. Over against this "either-or" stands the true Lord's Supper, which is the meal of fellowship of the body of Christ and therefore also the meal of the receiving and worshipping Church.

The ecumenical encounter

This however does not yet settle the question of "Lord's Supper" or "Church's Supper". For Christianity to-day is split into many churches which deny participation in the Lord's Supper to each other. We cannot denounce all those who celebrate the Lord's Supper apart from the communion of our own church as not being receivers and members of the body of Christ, neither can we denounce those who desire intercommunion beyond the limits of their own churches as individualists who misjudge the ecclesiological significance of Holy Communion and therefore distort the Lord's Supper. For the very fact which is shaping the present generation of Christians with an intensity hitherto hardly equalled in Church history is this : while we have found brothers in Christ and members of the body of Christ beyond the limits of our own denominations where we had not expected to find them, yet, in spite of the reality of our communion in Christ, it seems impossible to share the Lord's Supper with them. We have heard the voice of the Good Shepherd through such brothers in times of persecution and we have seen suffering in the name of Jesus those whom for many reasons we had not recognised as brothers until then. Moreover at ecumenical conferences we have confessed with them before all the world Christ as the Lord of Lords, and the unity of His body, the one Holy Church. We recognise with deep sorrow and with great shame that, in spite of the unity which we believe exists, we are separated by barriers which prevent the members of the various confessions from celebrating the Lord's Supper together : the teaching and order of our own church may hinder us from inviting others or accepting the invitation of others, or the teaching and order of another church may make it impossible for us to share in their celebration of the Lord's Supper. Thus brothers may not unite though they have recognised their unity ! This situation is the more shattering the more lively is our certainty

of the return of our Lord Who is coming. Then Jesus Christ the Shepherd will gather His flock to the great Supper in the Kingdom of God and as our judge will question us all at the same time why we on earth have not celebrated one Supper as one flock, why through schisms we have blasphemed the majesty of His name before all the world.

The more certainly we recognise members of the body of Christ in other denominations and the more strongly we are united with them by the love of Christ, the more radically we have to change our modes of questioning about our divisions at the Lord's Supper. Where hitherto we took it for granted that we ourselves had preserved the unity of the body of Christ but that the members of other denominations had departed from it, we now feel ourselves increasingly questioned by God whether it is not we who have profaned or even blasphemed the unity of the body of Christ. Whereas hitherto we had thought that only others had given up the unity of true doctrine and order, we now recognise that we are questioned whether we have not done so ourselves. Anybody who has not yet experienced this shattering reversal of the questioning is still outside the gates of real ecumenical encounter.

Whose soul has not been pierced, as if by lightning, by the parable of the Great Supper (Luke 14: 15-25)? The people who were bidden first refused one after another. They have no need to share the feast of their Lord who is calling them, because they are satisfied, because they are fully occupied and fully contented with their own affairs. Though they know that all they have is a gift from the same Lord who is inviting them, they set these gifts over against the Lord and use them as a pretext for declining His gracious invitation. The parable talks about land, cattle and a wedding. Might not this apply to our own theology, our own form of worship, our own piety, our own history, and even our own celebration of the Lord's Supper which prevents us from following the invitation of the

one Lord who gathers the one flock? And when Christ walked on earth, was it not just the pious ones who did not accept His invitation? We all know that the parable is immediately followed by an invitation to the poor, the maimed, the lame and blind in the city, and to the tramps outside the gates. Might not the place of those who in the pomp of doctrine and form of their own services shrink from the call to the one Great Supper, be taken by all the others of whom we think to-day as sinners, despisers of the sacrament, on the fringe of Christianity — all those beggars and tramps who precisely have no reason to be proud of their past? We are warned with the greatest emphasis that none of those who were bidden first will taste of the Great Supper (v. 24). Only the poor, the hungry, the downcast, the longing, the homeless will have a share in it. Have then the churches forgotten that not they but the Lord Himself sends out invitations to the Lord's Supper?

What can we do?

I am confining myself here to the consideration of that situation in which this problem becomes most painfully clear, namely ecumenical conferences. As during these meetings we are wrestling in a very special way with the problem of the unity of the body of Christ, it seems to me that a special solution of the question of intercommunion is required. This solution however ought not to be applied straight away to the living relationships of the churches as a whole.

Should we at ecumenical conferences arrange one single celebration of the Lord's Supper for all those present? Even if such a decision were taken by a majority vote, a considerable number of the members would undoubtedly, in the present state of the ecumenical movement, feel unable to accept such an invitation. Such a celebration would open up a new gulf, namely the gulf between partakers and non-partakers. In the present situation, many are prevented from partaking,

not only by reasons of ecclesiastical law but also by reasons of conscience, which can only be solved by the Spirit of the Lord Himself. The denominations are separated not only by differences in doctrine and order but also partly by the verdict of heresy and even partly by the denial of the Real Presence of Christ at the service of other denominations. Such judgments cannot be simply overruled, they need to be tested and revised in a new light. This cannot be done in a summary fashion as the difficulties between the denominations are by no means always the same. The basic presuppositions for one celebration for all do not yet exist.

Should we at ecumenical conferences abstain from celebrations so long as one common celebration for all is not feasible? In that way would we not make clear very soberly that preliminary nature of the ecumenical movement by which it is still limited to-day? Would we not at the same time avoid the shame which is inherent in the celebration of separate communion services? But how would people who at ecumenical conferences wrestle with each other for the unity of the body of Christ give up the strength which receiving the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper affords, even if they receive Him separately? For the body of Christ in the Lord's Supper is one and the same everywhere and at all times, even where it is not received together. And must not the holding of parallel communion services at ecumenical conferences inevitably open the eyes of those present to the weakness of contemporary Christianity? This weakness and this disgrace must not be hidden; this wound must remain open and painful until the unity of the body of Christ has become a reality. There is good reason to fear that without the celebration of the Lord's Supper at ecumenical conferences, this disgrace might be forgotten. We might be carried away into confusing fellowship in theological discussions or social and political arguments with the unity of the Church. At ecumenical conferences the confessions or denominations represented should hold their communion services in turn.

At ecumenical conferences every member should be present at the communion services of other denominations, and take part, hearing and praying. There is a way of critical participation which contradicts the spirit of the service and of the ecumenical movement. But there is also a form of criticism which the Spirit of God Himself performs, and not primarily man. Where the Spirit of God is at work, men do not question each other one-sidedly but everyone lets himself be questioned through the other and listens to what God wants to say to him through the other. Such a hearing and praying participation in the communion service of other denominations helps us to be aware of our own limitations and leads us to recognise the fullness of the gift of this Holy Supper. At each truly ecumenical encounter, whether we notice it or not, self-correction and growing recognition come about: they will come to full development only in worship.

A radical self-questioning

Everyone should question himself how far he or his denomination has made himself lord of the Lord's Supper. The introduction of intercommunion is not a question of generosity or pettiness but a task of fundamental re-orientation. We cannot carry out this task by occasionally taking part in ecumenical conversations or services, but it is laid upon us as a problem which must exercise our minds incessantly. Its solution demands not only our readiness for penitence but serious engagement in scholarly meditation. The reasons which stand in the way of intercommunion are very diverse and they must be re-examined one by one:

1. The refusal of intercommunion because of differences in the doctrine of Holy Communion can be a sign that men have taken over the sacrament themselves. There is undoubtedly such a thing as an excessive dogmatism which is without foundation in the institution of the Lord's Supper. Undoubtedly there are dangerous

deviations from the attitude of faith: whereas faith receives the mystery with longing expectancy, doctrine assumes sovereignty over the mystery. Undoubtedly there also exists a wrong conception of doctrinal unity which fails to recognise that the peculiar unity of the New Testament comes out of the diversity of its witnesses and their testimony.

2. The refusal of intercommunion because of differences in the order of the Church's ministry can be an expression of the fact that the ministerial office is no longer thought of as the instrument of God's dealings with men but has acquired a significance on its own account, which hinders the action of the one Lord. It may happen here that, in the place of the ministry which was instituted by God's free act, a caste of people and a man-made legal order have emerged which impede the saving and gathering act of God's mercy.

3. The refusal of intercommunion because of differences in congregational structures can signify that the Church's unity is no longer grounded in the one Lord, who calls its members out of the world, gathers them, illuminates them, endows them. Then the unity of the Church is wrongly conceived as primarily the belonging together of men of like views, like history, or even of the same race or nation. It may be that the sociological, even the combined religious and sociological structure of the denominational church stands in the way of the divine Shepherd gathering His flock.

4. Similarly, we must question the refusal of intercommunion on the ground of differences in liturgical order and customs of worship (e. g. the use of leavened or unleavened bread).

5. Such questions need to be followed through into the last details of the reasons for refusal of intercommunion. They need to be re-thought in the total context of theology and congregational life of the various denominations. Special attention should be given to the

relationship between word and sacrament. What does it mean that at ecumenical conferences we can always pray together and proclaim the word of God to each other, but we cannot celebrate the Lord's Supper together?

In such a thorough self-examination we have to win through to the reality of what is taking place in those celebrations, which means we have to win through anew to the reality of Him who gives Himself to the believer in the Lord's Supper, in spite of the strangeness, the faults and errors which stand between our denominations at the point of the celebration of the sacrament. At all events, this gift "passes understanding".

First steps

At ecumenical conferences each denomination should increasingly throw open its communion services to all members. During the great reunion negotiations in church history the usual way to intercommunion was as follows. First a consensus in doctrine between separate churches was negotiated; afterwards on the basis of this agreement the recognition of the other church, or the union of the hitherto separated churches was pronounced, and this eventually was followed by an act of intercommunion. But is there nothing to be said for a reversal of the process for ecumenical conferences? Could we not expect the union of divided brothers in the one body of Christ to follow from receiving the body of Christ together? Is it not only through receiving the Lord's Supper together that we can expect the growth of a new and common knowledge of the gift of this Supper, a new knowledge that would some day make possible the mutual recognition of the churches and the union of all? Consensus in doctrine ought not to be demanded one-sidedly as a condition for intercommunion; it must be hoped for as a fruit of intercommunion. This is true to the character of the sacrament as the Lord's Supper, as a meal at which Jesus Christ, Whose grace alone can unite us, is Himself both the host and the gift.

This reversed process will seem strange to many. It will only be possible if neither an invitation to all from any denomination, nor partaking at a celebration open to all, is the result of any form of pressure. Opening of the doors to each other for the celebration of the Lord's Supper can only be the act of God Himself Who is the Lord of the conscience, and at ecumenical conferences we have to watch carefully that freedom of conscience is safeguarded. For that reason it is necessary that the invitation which any denomination may issue to all, should be accompanied by an exposition of the conception which the church in question has of the gift of the Lord's Supper and a definition of who is deemed worthy to receive the sacrament. On occasion the denominations may vie with each other in their invitations in praise of the gift of the Lord's Supper, and through this praise liberate the consciences of those who now stand aside, so that they may participate in the fellowship. For the pre-condition for partaking in the communion service of another denomination must be the assurance that at that service the body and blood of Christ is administered and received. The churches which stand between the "catholic" and "protestant" camps should lead the way, namely those churches who cannot think of themselves as merely catholic or protestant in character. For they have a special possibility of discerning the reality of the one Lord's Supper in the diversity of protestant and catholic celebrations. Thus it is the teaching of the Lutheran Church that wherever, accompanied by the words of institution of our Lord, bread and wine are administered to a congregation, the body and blood of Christ are administered and received, whether or not the celebrant or the receivers respectively have the right understanding of this gift. For baptism is also recognised as valid by the churches, even when received or administered by heretics, as long as it is done "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost".

An image of the coming Christendom

What meaning can such intercommunion at ecumenical conferences have for the churches represented there? It is vital that no rash conclusions should be drawn. Such partaking at the celebration of another denomination does not mean a change of churchmanship on the part of the receiver, nor does it mean a union of those churches whose members have received the sacrament together. Intercommunion at ecumenical conferences may rather be thought of, for the time being, only as a strengthening on the way towards the unity of the Church. For the unity of the Church is more than the fellowship of the individual representatives of denominations who meet each other at ecumenical conferences. But how can the reunion of the Church and consensus on the doctrines of word and sacrament ever become a reality, if those who struggle for reunion do not hear the Gospel and receive the sacrament together? It is therefore to be expected that such intercommunion at ecumenical conferences will not remain without consequences for the emergence of a mutual recognition of faith and for a future intercommunion of the denominations in a corporate capacity. Certainly "open communion" between separated denominations is illogical in many respects; as illogical as the nature of the World Council of Churches which professes the unity of the Church, and yet is not the *Una Sancta*; which is a union of many churches and yet is not the *koinonia* in the meaning of the New Testament. Yet this road leads to the one Shepherd who gathers the one flock. Who would remain logical where all the churches are living on the grand illogicality of God, Whose justice pardons the sinner instead of condemning him!

If the course here described is adopted at ecumenical conferences, the image of the coming Christendom will be reflected in them more and more. For the unity of the Church towards which the World Council of Churches is working cannot be a manufactured uniformity, nor an

adaptation for the ecumenical movement of the Roman conception of unity in doctrine and jurisdiction, but unity in diversity. The goal we should have before us is a diversity of churches opening themselves to each other, to which intercommunion and mutual recognition of ministries and orders is being progressively granted. The goal cannot be abolition of the denominations ; it must be a community of denominations in which each is serving the other with the particular gifts given to it by the Lord in the past and present, and in which each one is breaking through its own limitations and correcting its errors.

Confessional Loyalty in the Ecumenical Movement

GEORGE FLOROVSKY

It has been recently suggested that what we need most urgently in the ecumenical movement is a "theology of the abnormal". Christian theology strictly speaking is basically concerned with the abnormal, with the most radical deviation from the divine norm of existence, with fall and sin. Even in the redeemed world we are faced with an appalling impact of sin. Sin is indeed already forgiven and a new humanity has been inaugurated in and by the Second Man. The fatherly embrace of God is again charitably extended to the repentant. Yet, repentance is still a task for man to perform, and it proves to be an exceedingly difficult one for frail man to accomplish. The prodigal son is still very slow in going back home. And therefore, in Christian theology, we find ourselves again and again in a paradoxical situation. Christian disruption, utter disunity in Christendom, is nothing but an antinomy and a paradox. The fold of Christ ought not to be disrupted. Theological intelligence fails completely to comprehend the predicament of disunity, created by human unfaithfulness and aberration.

The ecumenical movement, an endeavour to overcome and to heal the Christian schism, is inescapably a paradoxical venture. The final goal is, indeed, a reunited Christendom. Yet, the nature and scope of this prospective unity and reunion is variously described and

interpreted by Christians of different backgrounds and traditions. The method of *re-union* depends ultimately upon the conception one holds of the existing *dis-union*. And these conceptions utterly differ. Prescription always depends upon diagnosis. And, in our case, it is precisely the diagnosis that is uncertain and controversial. That is why it is so difficult to agree on the prescription. Several solutions have been suggested. Roughly speaking, one group of solutions can be described as a "theory of a common denominator" and the other as "the true Church and the secessions". Let us examine them in turn.

A common denominator

The theory of "a common denominator" amounts, in practice, to a recommendation to act *as if* there was no real schism, no true disruption, but rather only a sad misunderstanding, which could possibly be settled by some agreement. Christians are divided and mutually estranged indeed; nobody can deny this grim fact. Yet, in spite of all their unhappy divisions and separations, they are at one on many basic points. They are united in their common allegiance to the same Lord. One might have added, they are, above all, united in His redeeming will and love. He came precisely to recover the lost sheep and the scattered. In this perspective, it seems but reasonable to disregard the existing dissensions and disagreements and to act accordingly, *as if* all Christians were really at one. Are not all these disagreements utterly human — human misconceptions — and unity, a divine gift, that has been already given free in Jesus Christ, the Lord of all flesh. It is precisely at this point that the problem of what is usually described as an "open communion" arises and the predicament of the schism is felt most grievously and painfully. It seems to

be a shameful scandal that those who proclaim their common allegiance to Jesus the Christ, the Son of the living God and the Saviour of the world, the only sure hope in ages past and to come, are still unable to join together at His table. Much worse than that, a large part of them emphatically refuses to do so. The champions of an easy solution are utterly depressed by what seems to them to be obstinacy, lack of charity and brotherly understanding. It seems to them that the whole ecumenical endeavour is compromised by this obstinate resistance.

Now, from another point of view, it is not the ecumenical endeavour, but only a particular interpretation of it that is wrecked on the proposal of an "open communion". In fact, the whole theory of a common denominator comes into a blind alley, since it fails to carry a unanimous conviction. This fact in itself indicates that possibly the measure of existing unity or agreement has been somehow exaggerated and misunderstood. It suggests that the division probably goes much deeper than has been admitted by those who were ready to act together. It is indeed a dreadful thing that Christians cannot join together at one and the same altar. But it is exactly what should have been expected. For they are *really* divided. Several and separate communion services at an ecumenical gathering are but a spectacular projection of the very fact of the schism. And the schism cannot be overcome simply by agreements on our human level. One has to be courageous enough to bear the pain, and those who are compelled by their conscience to abstain from any "open communion" suffer, no less, but probably much more, than those who are prepared to go together.

The marks of a church

It is usually suggested that this obstinate refusal to join at the common Table is inspired by exaggerated "confessional loyalty" and by a lack of true ecumenical comprehension. Now, the phrase "confessional loyalty" is ambiguous and misleading. Surely, nobody would pledge his loyalty simply to a denomination, but only to the Church of Christ. The trouble is that this loyalty to the Church is variously conceived and interpreted. All "confessions" identify themselves, in one sense or another, with the Church of Christ, "protestants" no less than "catholics". In our present state of Christian confusion and chaos, one simply cannot escape some sort of discrimination between a "true" and an "untrue" church. It is no good pretending that the whole guilt of intransigence is on one side. Moreover, it is no good bringing forward the charge of intransigence at all. For, in fact, the word is but another and depreciatory name for conviction. We have to recognise, boldly and humbly, that our deep convictions differ. Yet, in spite of that, we have to stay together. The whole burden of the ecumenical endeavour is tied precisely to this small phrase: "in spite".

Obviously, "protestants" would suggest that all empirical churches should become churches in very truth, and in order to accomplish this purpose should go through a certain kind of reform and purification, more or less identical with the European Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They are committed, by the very logic of their belief, to an emphatic claim that the churches of the Reformation are representative of a true kind of church and that, consequently, no church can ever be true unless it has gone through a process of reformation. Un-reformed means in this connection exactly un-true.

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On the other hand, a "catholic" will never regard the Catholic Church as one particular denomination among many others. He will identify her with the Church of Christ. The claim may seem arrogant, it may easily be dismissed as a proof of spiritual pride or intransigent hypocrisy. Yet, it is to be understood that a "catholic" is committed to this claim by the very logic of his belief and conviction. Again, it is to be understood that this claim does not unchurch those who do not belong to the Catholic Church of history. The most rigid "catholic" will regard all faithful Christians as related, in some sense to be defined, or even as belonging, to the Church of Christ. There is implied in the "catholic" claim no anticipation of the ultimate eschatological judgment. The claim is laid down on the level of history, i. e. on the level of Christian practice and action. The true composition of the Church is known to the Lord of the Church only — no "catholic" has ever doubted that, and St. Augustine has stated it most frankly and emphatically.

Perhaps the real point is this : was the Reformation a gain or a loss — a step forward or a step astray ? Of course, this is only a rough way of putting it, and both the question and the answers must be carefully defined (which is, unfortunately, quite beyond the scope and the competence of the present paper). It may be very painful for a "protestant" to read this, it is very painful indeed for a "catholic" to write it. But it is not written to pain or offend anybody. Conviction is bound to be outspoken. And we have to share our respective pains, to bear each other's burdens, and to prove thereby our mutual confidence and our true brotherly affection. Both "protestants" and "catholics" are concerned with the marks of a true church. The tragedy is that they identify these marks differently, or even in opposite senses.

Open communion and intercommunion

One may seriously doubt whether what is called an "open communion" is open in the strict sense. The case seems to be rather obscure. There are two possible interpretations. Either it is presumed that all doctrinal convictions are at this point irrelevant, and that doctrinal conformity should not be regarded as a term of admission to Holy Communion; obviously, this assumption is itself a kind of doctrinal conviction, which is unacceptable for many Christians. Or, and this seems to be the case, an "open communion" is open only to those who satisfy certain requirements, of an obviously doctrinal character, and such an "open" table is still fenced. It is really irrelevant, whether a fencing formula is actually said or omitted: in any case it is implied.

In either case, the practice of an "open" communion is justified by a certain particular conception of the Holy Communion, which is not acceptable to those who refuse to join. The opposition of an "open" communion and a "confessional" communion is wrong. Strictly speaking, an "open" communion is also meant for a particular confession, i. e. for people of a particular persuasion, even if this persuasion is so wide as to ignore all doctrinal dissensions. An un-baptised member of the Salvation Army would usually be admitted, although he disbelieves the divine institution of the sacrament. A member of the Society of Friends would also be admitted if he so wished, although it has been made clear that any Friend who finds himself in need of habitual participation is to be reminded that his place is probably not with the Society. The door seems to be ajar in the direction of vagueness and indifference.

But surely those who hold a "catholic" view of the sacrament cannot conscientiously be admitted, since their belief in the sacrifice of the mass is to be styled a

“corruption” and an “erroneous doctrine” along with many of their other superstitions. A “catholic” therefore finds himself excluded from the “open” communion by the implied terms of admission and by the conception of the rite therein implied. It is no good talking of his obstinate resistance. His participation would be a non-sensical betrayal on his side, and a concealed insincerity on the other. And, in the end, it would not promote the ecumenical fellowship at all. A sentimental gesture cannot solve the conflict of deep convictions. Unity of brotherly feeling is not yet unity of faith. Are we permitted in the Church to be satisfied with anything less than this unity of faith?

Briefly, there are three main objections which constitute a radical impediment to an all-inclusive and “ecumenical” fellowship in the Holy Communion. *First*, utter divergence in the sacramental doctrine itself — possibly the conception of a sacramental sacrifice is the very point of demarcation. There can be no communion, because there is no *common* belief. *Secondly*, and this is but the wider context in which the first is to be seen, there are deep divergences in doctrine in general, although these divergences, in our own age at least, definitely cut across the historical confessions. And communion presupposes “one mind”, no less than “one heart”. *Thirdly* — and this is probably the crucial point, at least in the practical field — there is utter disagreement on the doctrine of Christian ministry. A “catholic” cannot divorce order from faith, a very definite Church order is for him an article of his integral Christian faith or dogma.

This fact has been partially recognised in recent times, in so far as many recent schemes of reunion included the restoration of a “historical episcopate”. This restoration was, however, compromised and rendered meaningless (from the “catholic” point of view), since

this order was emphatically excluded from faith or doctrine. For the "catholics", the point is not merely the restoration of an episcopal order, but the recognition of the sacramental character of the priesthood; but this still seems to many to be nothing but detestable "sacerdotalism". For a "catholic" an all-inclusive communion will be possible only after the integrity of the faith and the fullness of the sacramental fabric of the Church has been restored in the whole of Christendom. It will then be not simply a manifestation, by a human arrangement, of Christian charity and mutual recognition — and, in catholic conviction, the sacrament of the Eucharist was not instituted or meant for that purpose — but a true revelation of the Holy Church of God, in all her power and glory.

The whole ecumenical situation is certainly complicated and obscured by the fact that those who claim for themselves the name of "catholics" (not merely in a vague and general, but in a concrete and specific historical sense) are also divided and are not in communion with each other. And at this point another serious and painful problem arises, that of intercommunion. The difficulty in this case is of a different, though similar, character. Again, what is required for intercommunion is obviously unity of faith and the integrity of the sacramental structure. Unless this is secured and avowed, no action should be taken. The practice of an occasional intercommunion (or even of an occasional open communion) adopted in certain episcopal churches only confuses the issue. A true intercommunion can only be a corporate and catholic action. In a case in which the sacramental integrity of two churches which are not in communion with each other is mutually recognised, the unity of faith has still to be identified and emphasised by a corporate action of the churches concerned, and not simply by a personal conviction of some advanced individuals. In the

whole process there is no question of confessional loyalty, but solely of the catholic truth.

A fellowship in search

The tragedy of Christendom is precisely that the truth of God is still divergently apprehended. What is a sacred treasury for some, is a deplorable superstition for others. What is an advance in the eyes of one part of Christendom is a step astray in the conviction of the other. Yet, *in spite* of all that, all Christians within the ecumenical movement and beyond its actual boundaries should pledge themselves to stay together and to profess their common allegiance to the same Lord and Master. It is a paradoxical situation, certainly. Yet it is exactly that paradox that makes the pledge so valuable and promising. They should stay together, exactly because they are divided. The pledge is valuable because it implies pain and tension. We are given the cross of patience to bear ; let us glory in that cross. Our Christian pain is a token of recovery, a recovery which is to come from the Lord.

The ecumenical movement is primarily a fellowship in search. It is a venture or an adventure, not an achievement. It is a way, not the goal. And therefore an open communion would compromise the whole endeavour. It would be to pretend falsely that Christendom has already been reunited. We know only too well that it has not. Tension remains, compelling us to move on. For that reason we still have only an ecumenical movement and not a reunited Christendom. It is true, some unexpected agreements have been discovered and achieved recently, exactly in the process of a common search. Let them not be disavowed by any premature and unwarranted action, in which some of the partners in the discourse will never conscientiously participate. There is still a long and dangerous journey ahead.

It has been recently suggested that in the ecumenical conversation there has been a certain tendency to postpone agreements, even when they were possible ; once an agreement on some particular point seemed to be at hand and rather imposing, the subject has been deliberately changed and another highly controversial topic brought into the discussion. Possibly this is an exaggeration. What is true, however, is that in the ecumenical discourse we do not trust our most compelling agreements. We behave once more in a most paradoxical manner. We mistrust ourselves because we have a deeper insight into the mystery under discussion, and we are aware of an ultimate disagreement which we are unable or perhaps too shy even to mention or to describe.

Possibly it is the reverse tendency that is more prevalent. There is a tendency to invite or even to compel one's opponents to think in categories unfamiliar or alien to them. A "protestant" theologian will write his books and make his statements in his particular idiom and primarily for his own edification and will expect the "catholics" to follow his argument. Usually he will be misunderstood, simply because his partner in conversation fails completely to follow his peculiar manner of speech. A "catholic" will habitually do just the same, and each will accuse the other of misconception and misunderstanding. The guilt obviously is on both sides. We have to learn each other's idioms or rather we have to create a true ecumenical and common language in theology and possibly to un-learn our party idioms. It is an enormous task ; yet we can hardly escape it. We have to identify ourselves mentally with those partners in the discourse who do not share our own convictions, if we are going to arrive anywhere. Let us try to state the "catholic" conviction in the idiom of the "protestants" and let us invite them to talk to us in our own idiom. What is often taken to be confessional loyalty may prove

to be inadequate phrasing of a commonly accepted truth.

The true Church

This paper is an attempt to write in a new and ecumenical language. Probably the attempt has not been successful. Probably some would detect in it a heavy confessional flavour, and others would complain of vagueness. And so it will not be out of place to summarise briefly my main contentions in a language familiar to myself. As a member and priest of the Orthodox Church I believe that the church in which I was baptised and brought up *is* in very truth *the Church*, i. e. *the true Church* and the *only* true Church. I believe that for many reasons: by personal conviction and by the inner testimony of the Spirit which breathes in the sacraments of the Church and by all that I could learn from Scripture and from the universal tradition of the Church. I am compelled therefore to regard all other Christian churches as deficient, and in many cases I can identify these deficiencies accurately enough. Therefore, for me, Christian reunion is just universal conversion to Orthodoxy. I have no confessional loyalty; my loyalty belongs solely to the *Una Sancta*.

I know well that my claim will be disavowed by many Christians. It will seem to be an arrogant and futile claim. I know well that many things I believe with full and uttermost conviction are disbelieved by others. Now, I do not see any reason whatever to doubt them or disbelieve them myself. All I can reasonably do is this: to proclaim my faith and to try to phrase it in such a way and in such a manner that my poor idiom may not obscure the truth. Because, I am sure, the truth of God carries conviction. It does not mean that everything in the past or present state of the Orthodox Church is to be equated with the truth of God. Many things are

obviously changeable; indeed many things need improvement. The *true* Church is not yet the *perfect* Church.

The Church of Christ has to grow and be built up in history. Yet the whole and the full truth has been already given and entrusted to the Church. Revision and re-statement is always possible, sometimes imperative. The whole history of the Ecumenical Councils in the past is evidence of that. The holy Fathers of the Church were engaged in this task. Yet, on the whole, the deposit was faithfully kept and the testimony of faith was gaining accuracy and precision. Above all, the sacramental structure of the Body has been kept integral and intact. Here again, I know, this conviction of mine may be rejected as an illusion. For me it is a matter of evidence. If this is obstinacy, it is the obstinacy of evidence. I can only see what I actually do see. I cannot help it. But in no way am I going to "un-church" anybody at all. The judgment has been given to the Son. Nobody is entitled to anticipate His judgment. Yet the Church has her own authority in history. It is, first of all, an authority to teach and to keep faithfully the word of truth. There is a certain rule of faith and order that is to be regarded as normal. What is beyond is just abnormal. But the abnormal should be cured, and not simply condemned. This is a justification for the participation of an Orthodox in the ecumenical discourse, in the hope that through his witness the Truth of God may win human hearts and minds.

THE STUDENT WORLD CHRONICLE

De Ecclesia

I. A CHINESE DISCUSSION

For the past year or so a small group of young people, mostly leaders in Christian youth work, about half of them Chinese and half missionary, have been meeting together in an informal fortnightly Theological Circle. This brief paper is a report on one of their discussions. At the Federation General Committee it was used in a very profitable way by the group discussing intercommunion.

All members of our group are wholeheartedly in support of the ecumenical movement which has been steadily growing in strength during the past few decades, and in which we indubitably recognize the working of the Spirit of God. While neither ignorant of, nor unsympathetic with, reasons pertaining to faith and order which lead many churches to fence around the Table of the Lord within their own communion, and while recognizing to the full the importance in value of the confessional stand thus made by the churches concerned, we humbly suggest the following considerations in regard to intercommunion.

As Christians, we realize that we must honestly accept the fact of division within the Church, while moving towards that greater unity which we so earnestly desire. In our present divided state, which we regard as the product of man's sin but also as the occasion of God's redeeming grace, the further fact that various churches are not in full communion one with the other is a reflection of certain realities which it is necessary to recognize. The barriers, therefore, which some churches feel obliged to erect between themselves and other Christians when meeting at the Communion Table are a symbol of these realities, and should

be respected for the positive values they conserve. Yet if we are right in our fervent belief that God Himself is leading us towards increasing unity, we urge the need of a creative sacrament through which the Spirit of unity and love may do His work in all our hearts.

We each have our religious heritage, our convictions and principles, our living faith, to all of which we owe a solemn duty of loyalty and witness. Our chief stand, however, must be for none of these things, but upon that supreme truth and power which alone can unite us, and were embodied in our Lord's own prayer for His Church. As we read and re-read the words of John 17, and increasingly apprehend the standard of, the way to, and the reason for that unity with God in Christ of all who love and follow Him we gain a new divine perspective. The Church of Jesus Christ is, after all, His Church and not ours; the Communion Table is also His. We remember His words: "He that is not against you is for you." If we believe that it is our Lord's intention that we should be "perfected into one", can we not also, at appropriate times, and with deliberate purpose, meet at His Table with any and all of those who follow Him, whom in our hearts we believe *He* recognizes as His disciples, whatever the differences which could otherwise divide us? The rite then becomes a glorious symbol of the unity which Christ, and He alone, is giving us, and also an effective means of grace promoting that outward expression of our oneness which alone can manifest Christ's truth. As regards those churches who are not at present normally able thus to throw open admission to the Communion Table, we would suggest this practice, in present circumstances, only for particularly stated occasions.

In view of the foregoing considerations, we have one suggestion which we wish to make in the strongest possible terms. We feel with deep conviction that at interconfessional and interdenominational conferences, when Christians from churches which are not now in full communion one with the other meet together with the direct or indirect intention of expressing or achieving our unity in Christ and in the work of His Kingdom, on any occasion when the Lord's Supper is observed and the Eucharist

celebrated a welcome in Christ's name should be given to all Christians who desire to participate. There seems no reason why the rite should not be celebrated in different ways at different times during the same conference ; indeed, there is every reason why Christians of different communions should be given such a special opportunity to become more deeply acquainted with the riches of tradition and experience to be found in churches to which they do not belong. It seems to us, however, that it is a sin against the Body of Christ and against the fellowship which His Spirit creates to observe on such occasions communion rites from which other Christians are excluded. We believe that it would be better to have no communion service at all, sad though that loss would be, than for us when so gathered in the name of Christ to accept our divisions statically, instead of looking forward creatively to the glory yet to be revealed.

II. TWO LETTERS

Several delegates to the Federation General Committee and Summer Conference in North America in 1949 wrote about their impressions of these two meetings, with particular reference to the discussions on intercommunion and to the problems of arranging the worship programme which arose then. It has been considered worth while to publish extracts from two of these letters, which raise questions relevant to the discussion in this issue of The Student World.

First of all I want to say what a great experience I found the General Committee in all its aspects, the work in the commissions and sub-committees, the very interesting plenary sessions, and our life together, of which the worship was a central part. It was because of that grand fellowship throughout the whole time in all our work and life that I felt so strongly that something was wrong when the divisions appeared in the discussion on intercommunion. But I am very thankful for this discussion, for I had never before felt the seriousness of this issue so clearly as at Whitby and Bowling Green.

I had come from the Evangelische Studentengemeinde of Germany, which has always enjoyed common services of Holy Communion as the centre of its spiritual life and whole work. And so at first it seemed to me rather self-evident that it must be possible to celebrate the Lord's Supper together, especially as every Sunday we confess, often quite pathetically, "One Holy Catholic Church". My reasoning was this. If we believe in One Holy Catholic Church, we have to admit that only she has the right of celebrating Holy Communion. But our Lord has said Himself that where two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is, and thus there the Church is ; we therefore cannot identify the Federation with *the* Church, nor *a* church ; but in the Federation we are in the *Church*. So when this question was discussed I had a very uncomfortable feeling ; I felt that the approach to this issue was not straight, or at any rate was at least a bit unhappy. (I of course had not the slightest idea how to make it better.) In my conviction that intercommunion must be possible, the previous Federation policy of having separate communion services for the different church groups, or no communion service at all, seemed to me something of an evasion of the responsibility of seeking a solution of this question.

But all my reasoning got a pretty heavy shock when some other delegates explained their position. I suddenly realised the impossibility of an easy solution. I recognised the great tension and struggle of conscience that makes it so difficult and personally hard for our friends from some churches to live and work within the Federation. On one hand, if they are consistent with the teaching of their churches and loyal to it, they cannot recognise many members of the Federation as fellow members of the Church, in so far as they regard them as members of denominations which have split off from the fellowship of the Holy Catholic Church. At the same time they experience very clearly that it is not mere human friendship which links them with others in the Federation, but the Holy Spirit, the bond of unity of the Holy Catholic Church herself.

So it seems to me that the first real difficulty does not lie in the question of rites or the interpretation of the sacrament,

but in the question of our conception of the Church. And if we agree that this is the difficulty we suddenly see that we can no longer deal with the question of intercommunion as a separate problem, that communion and worship, as being both functions of the church (or congregation, or *ekklesia*), belong very closely together, and that in the Federation we can have either both of them or neither. Or do we believe that we can honestly worship together while feeling unable to have a corporate communion? If we are consistent the same reasons that do not allow us to have intercommunion forbid us also to have common worship. Either there is not such a thing as unity in Christ, in which case at Whitby we could have packed our suitcases and gone home, or there is such a unity, and it is real whether we pray, have communion, or merely eat, sleep and live together.

The second difficulty of course lies in the differences as to the meaning, interpretation and manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper. But in thinking about this I am forced to exactly the same conclusions as on the first point. Differences in the matter of communion are not really only differences on this specific issue, but indicate divisions of the churches running through the whole of their dogma and teaching, a typical example of which is Christology. And again at this point I see the inseparability of communion services and ordinary worship. If we are consistent we find that we cannot say the same prayers together and think we are in unity, because we only speak the same words while attaching different meanings to them. Or do we think that it is less dangerous to pray together than to eat the elements together? Are we not divided by exactly the same reasons in both cases?

I think the real conclusion of this is that we divided human beings are not able to have either intercommunion or joint worship. Shall we therefore refrain from having them? That would probably be the worst thing to do. Did Jesus at any time tell His followers to do certain things because they were able to do them? Did He not very often tell them to do these things *in spite* of the fact that they were unable to do them, and because He, as the living Christ, is able to do them? Did He not tell us

to have faith and confidence in Him — “Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?” I think if we have in mind the theme of the General Committee at Whitby, the recognition of the fact that we are unable to bridge the gulf ourselves is probably the right condition for our coming together *in spite* of all, and experiencing the richness of unity in all realms of life and worship, “unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead”.

We have already experienced this unity. We should not doubt it while looking at our insufficiency. It is not our achievement.

CHRISTOPH RHEIN.

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It is not in the “hurly-burly” of conferences but only in the quietness of reflection that the task of considering the theological implications of our common life can really be attempted. Yet even at the time the awareness that there were theological implications was very strongly expressed. Discussions which met difficulty and impasse at almost every turn could have ended in despair, but did not. The remark of one Anglo-Catholic member, that whatever else he did in the Federation hereafter, he must work out the theological implications of the life he experiences in it in relation to the sacramental doctrines of his church was one thrilling indication, not merely of a human determination to stay together, but of that reliance of faith by which alone the Federation can make its experiential and theological contribution to the ecumenical movement.

Yet where is the point of entry in that theological adventure? There are probably many which could be suggested — and which will be, according to the theological emphases and ecclesiastical situations of those who make them. Nor is it either necessary or wise for the Federation to choose only one of these. Their interplay on one another may be the means by which the most fruitful contribution will be made. Nevertheless the Federation must be adventurous in its thinking, and explore

new avenues of thought which may help to carry us beyond our present impasses.

It was a regrettable feature of the Conferences — as we so readily recognized — that Eastern Christendom was represented by so few. Perhaps this was the more regrettable at the point of our communion and intercommunion discussions. For it is recognized that there is one aspect of the Church and Eucharist which is stressed less in Western than in Eastern Christendom — their eschatological character.

The “either... or” between static and dynamic conceptions of the Church suggested in one of the addresses at Whitby is an unreal issue ; the key to the nature of both Kingdom and Church is a “both... and”. It *is*, and *is not* ; or rather, it is *now*, and it is *not yet*. The Kingdom is *now*, by the kingly rule of God in Christ, and the creation and life of the Church is a manifestation of that present Kingdom. But the Kingdom is also *not yet*, by the continued conflict of that kingly rule with evil ; the conflict is manifest in the Church as well as in the world. This concept of the Kingdom as a kingly rule rather than a realm, and as future as well as present, is fundamental to the New Testament.

The Church manifests both aspects of the Kingdom. It is a citizenship in two worlds, heavenly *now* by the presence of Christ the King, but earthly by the defects of its life — and therefore *not yet*. Hence there is an aspect of Church and Kingdom in which they are one *now*. That oneness lies in the sovereignty of God’s eternal purpose. But in another aspect they are *not yet* one, in so far as man has never fully responded to that purpose. The Church is therefore an eschatological event in human history in two senses. The eternal purpose of God now impinges upon it. He now confronts it in the final redemption by the Cross and Resurrection of our Lord. But the Church also looks forward to the revelation of its own wholeness in “the day of Christ and His appearing”.

The sacrament is a feast of the Kingdom, which is both *now* and *not yet*, given by the King in His Church, which is both *now* and *not yet*. Accordingly, it inevitably shares in the tension. In relation to the Old Testament banquet held in anticipation of

the life of the age to come, there is a sense in which the New Testament celebration is a real celebration of that life. It is founded upon the redemptive fact of the Lord's death, and expresses the life in Christ which is the life of "the age to come which has come". Yet in another sense it remains a symbol, it is "until the Lord come", still anticipatory, presently possessing that which is *not yet*. In it history is taken up into the supra-historical, for there the eternal impinges upon men. The past, by the perpetual reconstitution of the crisis in which the Kingdom enters history, the present, by the sacred mystery of communion, and the future, by the anticipation of His coming in glory are gathered up into a unity in which the time series of history is overcome. Yet it is *within* history that the eternal impinges. The celebration has not ceased to be part of history.

The relevance of such an approach to the Kingdom, the Church and the Eucharist lies in the fact that it seems to be the implied basis for steps which have already been taken toward a greater unity at the Lord's Table. The eschatological nature of the Church is implied, for instance, in the action of the episcopal churches in Western Christendom in permitting open communions at meetings assembled specifically for the furtherance of the Church's organic unity, and admitting to communion persons who by reason of circumstance have no access to the sacramental provisions of their own denomination. The division of the Church is thus recognized to be part of the *not yet* of the whole, rather than evidence that one denomination *is* and another *is not*.

A more conscious rediscovery of the eschatological nature of Church and sacrament may therefore afford greater opportunity for intercommunion. The celebration would be based on a point of unity within a common eschatological pattern of thought concerning it, and would in no way compromise the beliefs as a whole of various church traditions. If growing theological unity justifies such a development, it will become possible for the Federation to enjoy a common life of both witness and worship. Without it, the Federation cannot come to that full awareness of a common membership in Christ which alone reveals Church union as a divine imperative.

HARVEY PERKINS.

III. THE STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT AND THE CHURCH

The Student Christian Movement of Great Britain and Ireland has begun a thorough rethinking of its relationships with the Church. Alan Booth, General Secretary of the British S.C.M., writes :

When the S.C.M. of Great Britain and Ireland could no longer postpone a thorough examination of the relation of its activities to those officially sponsored by denominational agencies it decided to set up a special commission. The terms of reference of that commission are interesting : "To examine the life of the Church in a college or university community and to advise the Movement regarding its own function in this context..." Like many other national movements we are holding tightly to the conviction that the supernatural community of the Holy Spirit is part of the very gospel we preach, and therefore that the S.C.M. has religious significance only in so far as its fellowship is truly part of the life of the Church. Therefore we can only understand what the S.C.M. ought to be if we consider what the proper life of the Church itself is in a college.

This Commission has been at work for more than a year and its final report is expected shortly. But already its work has brought into focus some of the main problems. Notice two outstanding considerations which must control all discussion of this matter. The first is that the churches have reached a critical point in their understanding of what it means to confess that the Church is an ecumenical body. They have publicly committed themselves to one another at Amsterdam, but their denominational machinery and their accustomed strategies often continue to operate along other lines. If we speak of the life of the Church in a university, it is necessary to have in mind the new dawning understanding of the meaning of the word "Church" which has come to us through the ecumenical movement.

But at the same time our Federation study of the university has shown us that here again we need new understanding of the thing we are talking about, an understanding which will disclose something of the function which the university is called to fulfil

in the Divine purpose. The Church has a responsibility not only to individual souls who happen to congregate on a campus, but to the whole academic community and its institutions.

Here in Britain we have to face the fact that a student lives a divided existence as a rule between the academic community and the dormitory area, and that in particular his participation in the life of a living congregation will often lie completely outside the campus. Many believe that this is a proper arrangement, bringing the student into the company of the people of God in all their vocational variety, young and old, rich and poor. In any case it is inevitable, and it limits the extent to which the fullness of Church life can be planted in a college. But this is not to say that the Church has no specialised tasks in relation to the university. Perhaps the most profound arises from the fact that the world-picture which the university, largely unconsciously, presents is at variance with Christian faith. For the Christian student the world of his worship and the world of his studies are in contradiction.

It is then illuminating of the function of the S.C.M. to observe that it is set at a place where two quite different divisions within the Church's life converge — the place where the cleavages represented by denominational divisions are revealed as an offence against the Gospel, and the place where the divorce of work and worship bears some of its most serious consequences.

Against that general background it is possible to analyse various aspects of the life of the Church in a college, and see how far the S.C.M. is called to be its instrument. Take for instance the life of the Church as a royal priesthood, making intercession for men and offering up their life and activities to God through the sacrifice of Christ. That task is laid upon the Church everywhere and every day. Within the university it means that the Christian family has the task of intercession on behalf of all who do not bother to pray, and it is the place where the intellectual, personal, and social activities of the college are presented to God in penitence and love. But there is often no group other than the S.C.M. which can in fact arrange occasions for prayer in this sense. When the S.C.M. does see its responsibility in this

way, it perceives that "S.C.M. Prayers" are something more than the private affair of a few pious souls — they are both a university event and an activity of the Church in Christ.

Take again the pastoral task of the Church. In these days of deep spiritual uncertainty, it is often said that a student-run fellowship has not the maturity to perform the pastoral office adequately and that the churches ought to appoint trained men for the purpose. There is evidently a great deal in the first part of this contention, though it should be added that some undergraduates possess outstanding pastoral gifts. But the proposed solution is more dubious. For pastoral opportunity opens up much more naturally in this secular age after mutual confidence has been established on other grounds. Again people in real trouble sometimes find it much easier to seek help from a pastor whom they need never see again if they so desire. The very familiarity, ubiquity and professional label of the student chaplain or counsellor may bring him into close relation only with the godly folk of over-scrupulous conscience! Has not the S.C.M. to remind the churches that the front-line pastor of students is the Christian don, and to urge this responsibility upon the don himself? Ought not the S.C.M. likewise, realising its own strict limitations in pastoral equipment, to take trouble to know what dons, clergy or senior friends are available as advisers and spiritual counsellors and be ready to put students into touch with them?

Let me take finally the Church's duty to instruct its members. Is it not necessary that the churches should enter the university severally in order to gather and instruct their own members in the truth of Christianity as each denomination sees that truth? There are several warnings to be issued here. The first is that instruction in the faith which takes no account of the contrary influence of the rest of a student's studies is not effective. The Church cannot hope to confront the student with the faith and avoid doing battle with the university itself. But if you are going to tackle the university itself you will find it is much more properly done by a member of the academic community than by someone arriving *ab extra*.

The second warning arises from the fact that although we continue to take denominational divisions seriously in the matter of instruction of our young people, our leading theologians inform us that basic theological cleavages no longer run along denominational lines, but cut through all denominations. To this extent therefore the demand for denominational rather than ecumenical instruction is unreal.

Thirdly, it is precisely at this point that precepts derived from the Amsterdam Assembly can become practice. Is it the desire of the churches who committed themselves to one another to ensure that at least their student members are trained in ecumenical understanding? If so, and if as it seems likely, the S.C.M. is the instrument for such training, new and substantial responsibilities are cast upon us which cannot be undertaken lightly.

These notes are not in any sense a summary of the report of the Commission — that report is still being considered and its final form cannot be foretold. But they may serve to indicate the area in which the Commission is at work. They are inevitably conditioned by peculiarities of the British situation, and some of the most thorny matters have been deliberately omitted because a superficial treatment could not do justice to the points at issue. It is hoped however that the full report when it appears may be of some slight help outside the boundaries of these islands.

ALAN R. BOOTH.

The Student Christian Movement in Soviet Russia

The following article has been written by a former member of the Russian Student Christian Movement, founded at the beginning of the twentieth century by Baron Paul Nicolay and affiliated with the World's Student Christian Federation since 1913. The Movement entered a period of persecution and isolation immediately after the Bolshevik revolution, and while for a few years contacts were maintained, in the early twenties it became evident to the Federation that it could no longer continue correspondence with its friends in Soviet Russia. Although there is a Movement-in-exile in Western Europe, no news was received from the U.S.S.R. about Christian work among students until, at the end of the second world war, some Russians of the "second emigration" brought scattered information from this long forgotten world. This article, already published in Russian, is the first general report which the Federation has had on its work in Russia for more than twenty-five years.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?... Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us (Romans 8 : 35, 37).

Although the time to write the complete history of our Movement in the Soviet Union has not yet come, we may now lift an edge of the curtain that, for very understandable reasons, has been hiding the work of the Student Christian Movement in U.S.S.R. even from its friends. The object of this article is not to give a complete report, but to present an outline of the conditions in which Christians have had to live in the Soviet Union and to give some idea of the kind of activities which were possible for the Student Christian Movement. It may serve as an answer to those who doubt the possibility of the existence in Soviet Russia of religious organisations as well as believing individuals.

The life of the Movement in U.S.S.R. may be divided into three periods. From 1917-1920, after the October revolution and during the period of the civil war, the work was completely disorganised. The activity of the student organisations stopped completely in consequence of military mobilisation, the closing of all colleges and universities, the breakdown of transportation and widespread hunger. The members of the groups dispersed in all directions: some went home, some to fighting fronts, others left for the South and for the East in search of bread.

During the years 1921-1923, with the revival of academic life, our groups revived also. The dispersion of our members led to the formation of new groups in new centres.

The activities of these groups were carried on in nearly legal forms. At first the fight with the Orthodox Church was concentrated on the person of Patriarch Tikhon and the authorities were rather liberal towards the Christian communities which did not belong to the official Orthodox Church. Therefore, our groups were registered by the local *ispolkoms* in the same way as groups of sectarians, of theosophists, and of Tolstoy's followers. It was still possible to hold meetings and conferences and even to publish some things. It is true that some of our groups did not register; but still continued to exist in schools. The local authorities certainly kept them under observation, but, until further developments, did not molest them.

We did not attempt to register our Centre as an All-Russian or Central Union Committee; it would have hardly been legalised as such. But from 1921 on such a centre had *de facto* been created. It periodically published a typed bulletin, was in communication with local branches, and helped them by sending experienced lecturers, and instructors to newly organised groups. From then on yearly conferences of delegates from local groups took place and questions of general interest were discussed, such as finance, law, methods and organisation. These conferences were generally attended by thirty to forty members.

During these years the local groups worked at full speed; lectures were given, weekly closed meetings were held by active members, special groups studied the Gospels, spiritual and material mutual help was practised. In Moscow, for instance, a two-storied house that lay in ruins was rebuilt exclusively

through the efforts of the members of the Movement. This house became later, under the name of the "Students' Home", the centre of activity of the Moscow group.

Growing intimacy with the Church is a characteristic of this period. During the 1917-1920 period our Orthodox members had already started working in the church communities: in parish councils, brotherhoods and sisterhoods. They organised the youth, had talks with children, sang in choirs, lectured and even preached in churches. This continued during the following years. Clergymen and even bishops became our frequent guests, made reports and held conferences with us and seemed to appreciate very much the active part we took in the life of parishes. The previous sceptical attitude towards the Movement disappeared almost completely and our Movement found favour even in the eye of the head of the Church, His Holiness Patriarch Tikhon.

The year 1923-1924 saw the beginning of the third period of the Movement's activity, when it had to go underground. It presumably goes on in the same way up to now.

This period started with the destruction of the legally recognised groups. Although their existence had been tacitly recognised, they had always been kept under special observation by official as well as secret agents of the G.P.U. The latter attended the lectures, used to put tricky questions, registered as members of groups studying the Gospels, and even paid membership fees. The lists of active members, as well as the places where members met, were well known. It seemed hardly possible in such conditions to keep the Movement and its groups alive. But God helped us once more.

Our Central Committee was aware from the very beginning that the period of our legal existence would be of short duration and that persecution was inevitable. Our work was gradually shifted to underground methods: documents and publications were moved to secret and reliable places, correspondence with the Centre went through substitutes, proper names were changed, etc. Finally ways and means were planned to continue our activities in case the groups should be dispersed.

In 1923-1924 all the groups were searched, members were arrested, questioned and confined. All of them had to pledge

themselves not to continue their previous activities. Part of the members went into exile, others lost their right to higher education, others got but a few months of prison and some were only questioned. But thanks to precautions taken previously, or rather — thanks to God's mercy — not all of our members were arrested, not all of our lodgings were searched and not all addresses discovered. Some of the members of the Central Committee were safe and went underground with the whole Movement.

The religious underground in the U.S.S.R.

The moving forces of the underground are love and faith. Its members often work without special plans and directives, without formularies and declarations. The scattered fold and the dispersed, lonely Christian souls follow their shepherd without asking for his credentials. The most important thing for these congregations is to distinguish the true shepherd from the hireling: "The good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep... a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him" (St. John 10: 11, 5). Sincere spiritual life, surging up from within, inspired by sacrificial love for Christ, quickly outgrows all artificial framework.

We may say to those who doubt the existence of underground churches or groups and give credit to Soviet propaganda alleging that "the underground Church is a myth", that secret churches, brotherhoods and groups of believers have always existed, exist at present and will exist as long as there is no freedom of religion in the U.S.S.R. There have been and will be secret priests and bishops wandering through the spaces of our country, quenching the spiritual thirst of its chosen children; there have been and will be pious and God-fearing families and groups observing every important church holiday by singing prayers and reading the Scriptures even without a priest to assist them; there have been and will be secret schools where religion and prayers are taught, and groups of young people will go on reading the Gospels, studying the lives of saints and reading the works of the Fathers of the Church and struggling against dialectical materialism. Even amidst N.K.V.D. camps of "slave labourers" I have met

secret priests with the Consecrated Host, from whom we prisoners could receive Holy Communion.

One of the forms of activity brought into being by the special conditions of the Soviet underground is *Chrisomol*. *Chrisomol* stands for Christian Union of Youths (as opposed to *Comsomol* — Communistic Union of Youths). The Christian Students' groups in the U.S.S.R., associated with our Movement, are far from being the only ones of this character. We know of many other religious groups, some of them adhering to the Church and some following an independent line: religious philosophers, scientific theologians, students of the Scriptures, groups of youths belonging to brotherhoods and church communities, Orthodox as well as Old Believers, Catholics, Protestants, and even members of the *Comsomol*.

Nobody can say precisely how extensive the work is, nor give the number of *Chrisomol's* members, but it certainly exists; many have had contacts with it and N.K.V.D. agents know more about it than anybody else. Unlike the *Comsomol* it has no official Central Committee, statistics, or bulletin. This is why it is so difficult to persecute it and why the all-powerful communists cannot reach its governing centre. *Chrisomol's* units are scattered all over the Soviet territory, but secrecy is so imperative in the conditions in which they live, that they often do not even suspect one another's existence, although they work in the same spirit. It is quite possible for members of different groups of *Chrisomol* to meet at the same factories, *Comsomol* meetings or university auditoriums without knowing that they are members of the same all-Russian *Chrisomol*. Conditions of Soviet life have taught them to be secretive, firm and impenetrable.

The work of these groups inevitably follows different methods, some of which are groping and primitive. They are completely deprived of suitable literature, manuals or guiding instructions from their Central Committee. But there is one aspiration that is common to them all: their search for truth, their longing for God and their dissatisfaction with the officially imposed ideology with which they are stuffed from their "pioneer's" age onwards. This spiritual hunger is the driving force which impels them to search, to unite, to help each other and to dread neither the all-seeing eye of the N.K.V.D., nor the risk of being thrown out

of life into one of the "labour camps". It happened sometimes that it was there, in the Northern Siberian camps, that they met their *Chrisomol* brethren who had worked in other regions of the U.S.S.R., and were for the first time able to appreciate the real size and significance of the all-Russian *Chrisomol* organisation.

The *Chrisomol* members can sometimes do very little in an externally appreciable way. But they have their own inner secret world whose windows are open "towards Jerusalem", wherein they pray to God Who seeth and heareth in secret and shall recompense them. In answer to their prayers and longings God sends them the strength necessary to remain true to Him...

The author of the present article took part in the Student Movement during the period 1924-1934, followed by five years of N.K.V.D. concentration camps. Therefore all this information is limited to this period, but there are many indications to suggest that the work went on up to the war and has not been stopped until now.

When the Movement went underground it had to change its character. Conspiracy creates first of all external difficulties: members with no time at their disposal, lack of lodgings and of literature; the danger of open meetings, especially in students' homes; the complete impossibility of public meetings with reports and lectures. The methods of work were study of the Gospels in groups of five to ten members with infrequent reports made to each group separately, and individual work with newcomers, a very protracted process until we could be quite sure of them. More numerous meetings were very rare and could take place only under some acceptable pretext, such as an excursion out of town.

Then came as many internal difficulties when the schools were filled with party members. One had to find a new ground of mutual understanding with them. Old members of the Movement had to revise their methods. The Central Committee had to create a new section to study methods and to work out new rules for instructors. And in view of the complete deficiency of appropriate literature, short rules, reports and instructions were typed and distributed.

The hardest problem to solve was that of the Central Committee. It was extremely difficult to keep in touch with the

local groups: letters were inspected by a special N.K.V.D. office, travelling was too expensive; moreover there was nobody who could travel, for everybody had some employment. One had to use casual opportunities to send literature and information. It was therefore most important at least to have regular meetings and conferences of members of the Central Committee. It is easy to understand what were the difficulties we had to overcome. Our leaders had to sacrifice their summer holidays and their free days for this work. Nevertheless we managed to have our conferences every year. They certainly were not of the previous size; it was only members of the Central Committee, instructors of local groups and some students who met. About fifteen or twenty persons gathered together in some modest room, discussing their problems for several days without being able to leave the place lest some undesirable attention be attracted to them.

Arrests and exiles

One important responsibility of the Central Committee was the provision of relief for members of the Movement who had been arrested and exiled. These arrests and exiles often occurred independently of the Movement's activities: some were taken on the ground of their employment or their church activities, some for reasons of their origin. It was imperative not only to alleviate their own situation, but to lighten the burden of their anxiety for their families who were losing their principal breadwinner for five or ten years. And God alone knows how much love and abnegation has been spent by members and friends of the Movement in this inconspicuous service to those who were in prison and in need.

It was inevitable that there should be victims amidst students of this underground movement. N.K.V.D. agents, party members and *Comsomol* organisations closely follow every youth. From the point of view of the Soviet authorities every believing student, every actively religious person is an undesirable element. "You religious intellectuals", said an N.K.V.D. agent to a student during his questioning, "are more dangerous than any bandit. We try to prove that science is incompatible with religion and

you refute it by the simple fact of your existence. You are the more criminal when you try to poison our proletarian students by your preaching. We do not forbid you to believe in whatever you wish, but you must keep your beliefs to yourself."

Each person arrested because of religious beliefs is considered to be a political criminal and his activities are classified as counter-revolutionary. No sentence will ever mention that you have been condemned for praying to God or preaching Christianity (freedom of religious propaganda is guaranteed by the constitution of U.S.S.R.). But you will be accused of counter-revolutionary propaganda (Paragraph 10) if you act independently, or of counter-revolutionary organisation if you have associates. In both cases you will be condemned to three years or more of exile to distant concentration camps.

We have never heard of a case of a student accused of religious activities being acquitted. He was at best expelled from his university and exiled to some distant part of the country. But the customary verdict condemned him to three or five years of concentration camp with the inevitable prohibition against living in large cities after the end of his term. In consequence, he had to abandon any hope of receiving higher education.

We also have no knowledge of any case of our members being tried in normal or public conditions. They were always tried by N.K.D.V. agents, through local *troikas* and the verdict was pronounced by the "special N.K.V.D. tribunal" in Moscow. There was no defence and no appeal was possible.

It is worthwhile to note that one of the favourite methods used by the N.K.V.D. — that of penetrating through their agents into the leading committees of the organisation — never succeeded in our case. The inner structure of our groups presented an insurmountable obstacle to the penetration of spying agents. No *agent provocateur* has ever been able to convince a true follower of Christ, that he was also following Him. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God... but he that is spiritual judgeth all things." (I Corinthians 2: 14, 15.)

Therefore during all these years there was only one serious case of an arrest of seven old members of the Movement at a time. These were well known to the N.K.V.D. from the time when the Movement existed and worked on legal terms. All

the other arrests were single and casual and the result of either personal carelessness or denunciation.

It is well known that persons returning from exile continue to be under special observation by the N.K.V.D., that they have to register in every new place they live, etc. They are in consequence always under the threat of new persecutions and can thereby endanger the existence of the organisation as a whole. Therefore although intercourse is kept up with the liberated member, he is completely isolated from any underground activity. This is very painful for the liberated member, but one has to admit that there are serious reasons for this course.

Does the work continue ?

We are convinced that the work amidst the youth goes on. This conviction is based less upon the poor information we manage to get from behind the "iron curtain", than upon knowledge of our youngsters' hearts. We know that many of them keep God in their hearts and seek for some means of finding a way to Him. And among these young people there are many who cannot find satisfaction in substitutes of the order of the Marxist faith and who thirst for God and brotherly relations among men. Beneath all the crust of official atheism and materialism that is imposed upon Soviet youth, they still long for Light.

A tragic story that has been told to me by a refugee confirms this opinion.

"In 1940 I was arrested for the sixth time and was brought to the prison of Novosibirsk. After long questionings I was condemned to be shot and remained during eighty-six days in the cell of those sentenced to death, until at last the death sentence was suspended. The deepest impression I got during those days of my stay amidst people sentenced to death was that of six members of the *Comsomol*, students of the Mining Academy of Novosibirsk, arrested for their religious convictions. They were just ordinary Soviet youths who had grown up in the usual atmosphere of atheism and knew no religion. But it happened somehow that a Gospel came to the hands of one

of them and he — out of pure curiosity — read it. The result of this reading was astounding ; his whole life was upset. He was convinced that he had found the thing he had been looking for... And immediately he thought of initiating his friends into what he had discovered. Five of them went through the same spiritual experience, but the sixth denounced them. All six were arrested and the N.K.V.D. accused them of — conspiring against Stalin. They all were very firm during the questioning. They all spoke of their faith and admitted no other crimes they were accused of. Nevertheless they were sentenced to be shot. I am sure there was no remission of punishment, although I left our cell before their sentence was confirmed. What use is there under the Soviets for *Comsomol* youths who come to believe in Christ ? »

If six *Comsomol* youths, who had probably never been baptised and had presumably never entered a church, felt themselves attracted to Christ, started preaching Him and have merited martyrs' crowns, does not this prove that the soul of Russian youth is still alive and only awaiting His Call ?

BOOK REVIEWS

The Christian in Politics

POLITICS AND PERSONS. By Father St. John B. Groser. Student Christian Movement Press, Ltd., London. 7s. 6d.

CHRISTIANITY AND COMMUNISM. By John C. Bennett. Student Christian Movement Press, Ltd., London. 7s. 6d.

A poorly dressed girl is put out of a Newcastle church because she cannot afford to wear a hat and falls under the opprobrium of the notice which declares : "No dogs or women without hats allowed in." A young parish priest from a slum area is dressed-down by his Bishop for being "political" in his pioneering work of organizing boys' clubs. Crowds in the East End of London make a human blockade in the streets to prevent the proposed march of Mosley and his Blackshirts through their area. This is the sort of stories and reminiscences of an Anglican parish priest, which one finds in *Politics and Persons*. Father Groser has spent a lifetime rich in courage and love working in depressed areas in Britain. As R. H. Tawney in his foreword says, "Combining an unusual width of practical experience with a sensitiveness of insight given to few, the author is concerned less with the material conditions of a much-tried population than with the mentality born of the revolt against them". This provides us with a fruitful and stimulating book, one which should be of interest to any sensitive reader and especially so to those who have known Father Groser in his close relationship with the Student Christian Movement.

For one thing, this book helps us to understand the harsh facts of the economic and social conditions in post-1918 Britain ; the protest of the Popuar Board of Guardians, the work of George Lansbury, the life "under the arches", the human brutality in the General Strike of 1926, all are handled with the vivid touch of one who has had first-hand experience of them. In quite personal terms we have an excellent introduction into

the factors which have led to the rise to power of the Labour Party. His description of the incredible poverty and privation to be found in Britain in the twenties and thirties will be a healthy corrective for those who too easily grouse about "harshness" of the present Government and the paucity of the weekly rations! He presents a strong case for the early socialist motto: "Damn your charity, we want justice."

For another thing, it brings home very forcefully how inevitably Christian "principles" become involved in political and economic affairs. The degradation of human dignity which can come through bad housing, or unemployment, or the violation of personality which can result from humiliating "Means Tests" are illustrated with almost painful clarity by Father Groser. His experiences are another formidable witness against those who think that "politics" and "religion" can be separated; they also indicate that those who wish the Church "to stay out of politics" are really (whether intentionally or not) sanctifying the status quo, and often thereby the perversion and denial of man's God-given "personality". The Christian faith deals with persons, and today they are persons who have been deeply influenced in almost every part of their lives by economic and political factors. *Politics and Persons* is a healthy reminder to the man working with "persons" that politics is an inescapable part of modern man's character; it is also a reminder to the man working in "politics" (and this is particularly true of the student) that all political theories and programs must eventually be related to the personal level with all its sorrows, joys, aspirations and needs, and be qualified by the nature and destiny of man as the prodigal in the swine pens and yet as the one being awaited in the mansions of his Father.

Father Groser is less convincing when he is drawing out the wider political and theological implications of his experiences. For instance, in speaking of the Labour Party he says, "There is, in my opinion, no possible political alternative to it in existence". This is an understandable sentiment in terms of the trying conditions of the London East End, but it is hardly a satisfactory substitute for parliamentary tradition as the basis for British democracy. In the case of Father Groser, "love covers a multitude of sins" and *Politics and Persons* is a testament of a life of love.

Nevertheless, this weakness should remind us that there is another aspect of Christian responsibility which ought not be ignored. That is, Christianity is a personal religion and it must see politics in that light; but it is also a religion with faith and doctrine and these too are involved in a Christian's political responsibility.

It is this latter approach which is made in Prof. Bennett's *Christianity and Communism*, where he deals with one of the most pressing and perplexing of these modern political problems impinging on faith and doctrine. While this book is intended to be a systematic treatment of the relation between Christianity and Communism presented in elementary and concise terms "for students and other young people", it will certainly appeal to a far wider audience. Few Christians today would not profit from Prof. Bennett's warning: "There is a danger that they may concentrate on a caricature of Communism and thus miss the corrective that is in it, and there is a further danger that they may celebrate a premature victory over the caricature and thus fail to discern the deeper issues which divide Christianity and Communism." It is against this kind of misunderstanding which Prof. Bennett seeks to write; in the limited space at his disposal he does so remarkably well and with gratifying simplicity and lucidity.

He makes what he calls the "dual approach" to Communism. On one side it is an aggressive movement of power which threatens personal freedom and basic human rights and which must be resisted by Christians. On the other side it owes its success and expansion in large part to the "failure of Christians, and of Christian Churches, to be true to the revolutionary implications of their own faith". Christians, therefore, must face Communism in a spirit both of resistance and repentance. It is Prof. Bennett's belief that the basic weakness of Communism is a religious one for, as he says, "unconsciously it offers false solutions to religious problems, the existence of which it does not recognize". Once again we are shown, as by Father Groser (though in a different way), how intimately the religious and political issues are bound together in the final analysis. It is interesting to note, in reference to Father Groser's book, that Prof. Bennett detects one of the basic conflicts between Christianity and Communism in their respective attitudes toward the "ultimate status of persons".

Here, however, one may feel a sense of dissatisfaction. If Christians really do understand the ultimate status of persons in relation to the political milieu why are they so ineffective in making intelligible to the man on the street what they have to say? As one man, who has had a long and testing life in political affairs, wrote to me recently regarding the reports of the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches: "That Christians are 'assured of the final victory over all sin and death through Christ' is all very well, but let's be practical." One wonders sometimes on just what practical experience the constituency of many recent Christian meetings base their political pronouncements. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the Church finds such difficulty in getting its point of view across today. Another reason must be the fact that personal example is one of the most powerful methods of presenting ideas; the life of too many Christian congregations shows little sign of having any correspondence with the Christian teaching on the right relationship between the individual person and the community.

These two books are not similar in subject, treatment, approach or context and yet they strangely overlap one another. Father Groser, in dealing with "persons", is led to deal with theoretical and "doctrinal" questions; Prof. Bennett, in making his "systematic statement", is inevitably concerned with "personal" questions. The books together help us to appreciate the importance of both these aspects of Christian political responsibility and the necessity of keeping both emphases properly balanced for a well-integrated Christian witness in political life.

KEITH R. BRIDSTON.